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EVANGELICAL DISCOURSES

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ESSAY

ON THE

Powers and Conteſts of FLESH and SPIRIT.

BY *ISAAC WATTS*, D. D.

LONDON:
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M, DCC, XCI.

THE

DEDICATION.

TO THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST

ASSEMBLING IN

BERRY-STREET, LONDON.

Dear Chriſtian Friends, beloved in our Lord,

HAVING dedicated to you my *firſt volume* of Sermons, printed twenty-ſix years ago, I thought it proper to addreſs *this* to you, being the laſt I am ever like to publiſh, that I might teſtify to the *world* the continuance of my ſincere affection for you; and ſignify to *you*,

my ardent deſire to do what I can, in my preſent weak ſtate of health, to promote the welfare of your ſouls.

THE *Eſſay on the Powers and Conteſts of Fleſh and Spirit*, which is added at the end of theſe Diſcourſes, has been written many years ago, and I hope it may be made uſeful, under the bleſſing of God, to lead private Chriſtians to form a right judgment, in many things relating to their ſpiritual concerns.

AS I truſt all theſe papers contain the truths of God, which I have

have thus recommended to you, ſo I am perſuaded you will find them to be exactly conformable to the New Teſtament, in all your reviews and ſtudies of that bleſſed book. It is there my hopes of eternal life are fixed; and in this hope, I truſt all of you will be found walking ſtedfaſtly in the ſame faith, by the ſame rule, till you are at length made happy partakers of the ſame ſalvation.

THE great harmony which has ſubſiſted betwixt me and my dear and worthy brother and colleague, the reverend Mr. Samuel Price, for more than forty-three years, with-

out any interruption, has been very comfortable to us, and a conſiderable bleſſing to you. May the Spirit of God render his continued labours amongſt you, in the goſpel, very ſerviceable, for your further eſtabliſhment and growth in grace! With this deſign, I commit theſe Diſcourſes to the providence of Chriſt, and commit *him* and *you* alſo into his hands, to whom, I doubt not, you have often ſurrendered yourſelves.

And let me intreat you, as a church of Chriſt, not only to *ſuffer*, but to *regard* the word of exhortation, which, as your *aged paſtor*, whoſe

whoſe voice you may probably hear no more, I would now, in a ſolemn manner, leave with you: *(viz.)*

CONTINUE to be of one mind, live in peace, be careful to practiſe all the duties of holineſs and righteouſneſs, keep cloſe to God, by humble fervent prayer and dependance, ſeek his face for direction, and a bleſſing in all your affairs.

To the God of almighty power, and infinite wiſdom and grace, I commend you; who is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are ſanctified.

FINALLY, my beloved friends, farewell. May the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be ever with you. *Amen.*

I AM, with much respect, under very declining circumstances of life,

Your affectionate friend,

and faithful servant,

in the gospel,

STOKE-NEWINGTON,
Jan. 13*th*, 1746-7.

ISAAC WATTS.

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DISCOURSE I.

The DIVINE COMMISSION of St. PAUL Examined and Eſtabliſhed:

IN A

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The Firſt Part of this SERMON.

Acts xxv. 18, 19.

Againſt whom when the accuſers ſtood up, they brought none accuſation of ſuch things as I ſuppoſed: but had certain queſtions againſt him of their own ſuperſtition, and of one Jeſus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

THE hiſtory which introduces theſe verſes may be repreſented in ſhort in this manner:

The Jews were highly enraged againſt St. Paul for preaching the goſpel of Chriſt with

with ſuch freedom and boldneſs in ſeveral places; and when they found him at Jeruſalem, they took occaſion to ſeize him, and bring him before the magiſtrate, with heavy accuſations; but when he had defended himſelf ſo well, the magiſtrates ſaw no cauſe to puniſh him. The Jews lay in wait to aſſaſſinate him, or murder him privately; which being known, he was ſent by night to Ceſarea, to be judged by Felix the governor; and there he lay in priſon two years, till a new governor, Feſtus, came into the province.

The Jews ſtill purſued their malice againſt Paul, and what they could not obtain of Felix, they hoped to perſuade Feſtus to grant them: And when Feſtus had heard what charges the Jews brought againſt him, and when Paul appealed unto Cæſar, fearing that Feſtus would comply with the unjuſt deſire of the Jews, Feſtus had a mind to hear the whole cauſe, that he might ſend Cæſar a more particular account. Now king Agrippa being there upon a viſit, Feſtus tells Agrippa the ſtory in this ſpeech of which my text is a part. Ver. 17, &c.

And from theſe words we may take occaſion to make theſe three obſervations:

I. *Civil governors among the Heathens, before they were taught to perſecute the Chriſtians, thought it ſtrange to have matters*

matters of pure religion brought before them, where the ſtate and the peace of it was not concerned.

II. *The reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead is the grand queſtion in our debates about Chriſtianity, and which we are ſolicitous to maintain, in vindication of our religion.*

III. *Paul would not have affirmed Jeſus Chriſt, a dead man, to be alive, without very good proof of it; knowing that the whole religion which he taught the world depended on the truth of it.*

Firſt obſervation. *Civil governors among the Heathens uſually, in ancient times, thought it ſtrange to have matters of pure religion brought before them.*

Feſtus imagined ſome dreadful accuſation of ſedition or murder was brought againſt Paul, or ſome high crime againſt the ſtate, when he was with ſuch fury brought before him; but there was nothing of this kind appeared. St. Paul expreſsly ſays, *He had walked uprightly before God and man, and exerciſed himſelf to keep a good conſcience toward God and men; a conſcience void of offence; and after many years, he came to bring alms to his own nation, to do his country a kindneſs, and the Jews ſeized him, upon pretence of his opinions being contrary to the religion of their nation.*

The

The great deſign of civil government, and the inſtitution of magiſtracy among men, is to keep the peace, to ſecure the perſons and properties of mankind who are innocent, from all manner of injury; and there is nothing more of religion comes within their province, than is abſolutely neceſſary to ſecure the public peace. Now, upon this account, and that with ſome appearance of reaſon, it hath been ſuppoſed that Atheiſts, or thoſe who deny God, or his providence, or his government of the world, may be juſtly puniſhed by magiſtrates, ſo far at leaſt as to be baniſhed from their dominions; becauſe they who deny the knowledge and juſtice of a God, a ſuperior governor, can give no ſecurity by oaths, of their allegiance or loyalty to any government whatſoever; and will break all manner of bonds when they can do it ſafely. But where ſome divine power is owned and acknowledged, who knows and will puniſh perjury and falſehood, the civil governor hath no further power in affairs of pure religion, where the peace of mankind, the property of man, and the ſafety of the ſtate, are not concerned: Now theſe privileges and powers are not impaired by any article of the religion of nature.

This was the notion of the wiſer and better Heathens by the light of nature, and therefore you do not find them uſually quarrelling about their gods, and bringing one another before

before courts of juſtice, becauſe of their contentions and differences in matters of their religion: Nor would the magiſtrates bear it. This appears in the caſe of St. Paul at Corinth, Acts xviii. 12—16. 'And when Gallio was 'the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made inſurrection with one accord againſt Paul, and 'brought him to the judgment-ſeat, ſaying, 'this fellow perſuadeth men to worſhip God 'contrary to the law. And when Paul was 'now about to open his mouth, Gallio ſaid 'unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, 'or wicked lewdneſs, O ye Jews, reaſon would 'that I ſhould bear with you; but if it be a 'queſtion of words and names, and of your 'law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge 'of ſuch matters: And he drove them from 'the judgment-ſeat.'

But then Gallio was much to blame in the 17th verſe, where he took no cognizance of the Greeks beating Softhenes, an innocent man, being *the ruler of the ſynagogue;* which was a crime againſt the peace of the city, and an offence againſt the government, which Gallio ought to have reſented.

But however the civil magiſtrates among the Heathens had nothing to do in matters of pure religion, yet the Jews were continually running to the civil magiſtrate with their charges againſt thoſe who oppoſed their religion, or any part of it. And this is the plain and apparent reaſon of it: The government

of the Jews was a theocracy: God was their king as well as their God; the law that he gave them by the hand of Moſes was the law of their ſecular affairs as well as the rule of their religion; and therefore the high-prieſt was made a *judge* in many *civil* affairs as well as *religious*. Their religion and their civil government were ſo interwoven, by God's being their king as well as their God, that there were many crimes in religion to be puniſhed by the civil magiſtrate, by the appointment of God himſelf; which makes the caſe of the Jews different from the caſe of all other nations under heaven: For no people ever had God for their civil and political governor and lawgiver, but the Jews alone.

Chriſtianity does not claim, or aſſume, or pretend, to any ſuch privilege or power: It does not alter this matter from what the light of nature hath determined: It introduces no new civil government, but leaves all theſe matters as it finds them: and ſince the Judaic ſtate and government are aboliſhed, there is no magiſtrate on earth hath power to enquire or command, to rule or puniſh, any further in matters of religion, than to ſee that the ſtate ſuffer no damage, and the peace of mankind, and the government be ſecured.

But this hath been the unhappineſs of Chriſtians almoſt in all ages ſince Chriſtianity began, they have been cited before magiſtrates, and puniſhed even by their fellow-Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, as well as by the Jews and Heathens, for thoſe notions and practices wherein the magiſtrate hath no power. This the Jews began you ſee very early, and the Roman governors and Heathens have carried it on; and Chriſtian magiſtrates have carried this matter to the height, but it is in the Antichriſtian church. They have done this by bloody perſecutions, racks, torments, and murders of the beſt of their fellow-Chriſtians, where the very light of nature dictated to the beſt and wiſeſt of Heathens, that they had no power or authority; and it is a plain confeſſion of it, where Feſtus and Gallio were not willing to meddle; nor would Pilate himſelf, who crucified Chriſt, have done it, if the Jews had not almoſt conſtrained him; as ſufficiently appears in the hiſtory of the death of Chriſt. Let us remember then, that the religion of Chriſt is not built on the wiſdom nor power of man, nor doth it need ſuch a ſupport. All that Chriſtianity wants, is to have the perſons, and property, and peace of its profeſſors, ſecured againſt the outrages of wicked men. Its own truth and excellency, and divine authority, will make its own way into the world by the aſſiſtances of the bleſſed Spirit, where human powers do but let it alone, and preſerve it from the unrighteous violence of its neighbours.

Second obſervation. *The reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead is the chief article, and the grand point, which private Chriſtians and miniſters are ſolicitous to maintain, in the vindication of their religion.*

This was the point that ſtood forth to view, and ſhewed itſelf with ſuch evidence in the debate between St. Paul and his accuſers, when Feſtus gave them a hearing, that he makes a ſpecial remark on that, as though it were the moſt conſpicuous and remarkable article of their contention. Peter and Paul were the two chief preachers among the Chriſtians, who are recorded in ſcripture, and you find them continually inſiſting on the reſurrection of Chriſt. It was chiefly the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead that was the matter of Paul's ſuppoſed hereſy and crime, as Feſtus underſtood the matter. This was the great point of conteſt.

I. *Reaſon.* Becauſe *this article of the reſurrection of Chriſt is a moſt effectual proof of his divine commiſſion.* This point, whether *Jeſus Chriſt, who was dead, is now alive, or no*, is a queſtion of ſuch importance, that the Chriſtian religion ſtands or falls with it. It is certain Jeſus Chriſt was once dead; this the Jews allow, this Feſtus takes for granted: Jeſus was certainly crucified, a ſpear run into his ſide, his heart's blood was let out, he was buried, and Pilate the governor, and the prieſts, ſealed up the ſepulchre, to guard it againſt

againſt all poſſible fraud of ſtealing away the body.

Now if he be not riſen again, his religion is not true, his pretences are vain; he was not ſent from heaven, nor is he a prophet or meſſenger of God. St. Paul grants, 'If Jeſus be 'not riſen your faith is vain, ye are yet in 'your ſins; and we who preach a riſen Jeſus 'are falſe witneſſes.' 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15. But on the other hand, if Jeſus be alive, then his religion is divine. Let me juſt mention theſe two reaſons for what I ſay.

1. It is an undeniable proof of his divine commiſſion, *Becauſe the prophets foretold this reſurrection concerning the Meſſiah, though in more obſcure language, and darker expreſſions.* Now if he had not riſen from the dead, then Jeſus had not been the Meſſiah whom the prophets foretold. See Acts xxvi. 6, 8. for thus St. Paul pleads: 'And now I ſtand and 'am judged for the hope of the promiſe 'made of God unto our fathers:——Why 'ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with 'you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?' 1 Cor. xv. 4. Paul owns that he was dead, and 'That he was buried, and that he roſe 'again according to the ſcriptures.' Acts xiii. 32, &c. 'The promiſe which was 'made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled 'the ſame unto us their children, in that he 'hath raiſed up Jeſus from the dead.' Iſa. liii. 9—12. 'He poured out his ſoul unto

'death. He ſhall ſee his ſeed, he ſhall pro-
'long his days.' Pſal. xvi. 10, 11. 'Thou
'wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, nor ſuffer
'thine holy one to ſee corruption: Thou
'wilt ſhew me the path of life.'

But on the other hand, if he did riſe from the dead, this is a thing which a mere man could not do by his own power, nor would the holy and all-wiſe, and true and faithful God, ſuffer any evil powers to do it for the vindication of an impoſtor; and therefore he muſt be the true Meſſiah.

2. It is alſo a moſt effectual proof of his commiſſion from God, *Becauſe Jeſus Chriſt foretold this concerning himſelf;* John ii. 18, 19, 21, 22. *viz.* That he ſhould riſe from the dead, Mat. xvi. 21. The miracles which Chriſt performed were very great, and ſufficient to prove his divine authority: But ſince he gave forth ſuch a prophecy concerning himſelf, if this prophecy had never been fulfilled, it would have weakened the force of his miracles, and given us reaſon to ſuſpect what power they came from. This his riſing from the dead was the great and crowning miracle that gave confirmation to all the reſt.

Now conſidering this reſurrection from the dead, to be foretold by the prophets, and by himſelf in his life-time, this was as great a teſtimony as could be given of God's approving him as a prophet ſent from heaven: For it is the peculiar property and work of God

God *to raiſe the dead.* See Rom. iv. 17. This is God's eminent prerogative. Surely he muſt be no common favourite of heaven, on whom the great and almighty God beſtows ſuch a privilege. Acts iii. 13, 15. 'Ye have killed the Prince of life, whom 'God raiſed up from the dead, whereof we 'are his witneſſes.'

II. *Reaſon. Becauſe as his riſing from the dead is the great proof of his miſſion, ſo the reſurrection of Chriſt is the great foundation of the Chriſtian's hope; which will appear in ſeveral particulars;* viz.

1. This was a teſtimony of his having anſwered the end for which he died, *having made full atonement for ſin*, and his being releaſed from the hands of puniſhing juſtice. Acts ii. 24. Rom. iv. *ult.* Rom. viii. 34. He took our ſins on him, he did bear the puniſhment of our iniquities; 'he bare our 'ſins on his own body on the tree, &c.' And 'death is the wages of ſin.' Now when he had taken our ſins on him, unleſs he had made full atonement and expiation for ſin, he would have lain under the power of death ſtill; but being raiſed from the dead, it appears, that divine juſtice hath received full ſatisfaction for ſin; and the way is open for the juſtice of God to receive ſinners into favour.

2. *This is the beginning of his exaltation and his power, to beſtow all the bleſſings of the*

goſpel, ſanctification, ſalvation, and eternal life; as well as all the gifts of the Spirit, which confirmed his religion. See Acts ii. 32, 33, 36. 'This Jeſus hath God raiſed 'up, whereof we are all witneſſes: There- 'fore being by the right hand of God ex- 'alted, and having received of the Father 'the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath 'ſhed forth this which ye now ſee and hear: 'Therefore, let all the houſe of Iſrael know 'aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame 'Jeſus both Lord and Chriſt.' Acts v. 31. 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, 'to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give 'repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of 'ſins.'

His government, his interceſſion, his coming to judgment, all depend on this; and his power to beſtow heaven on his diſciples, as well as his power to puniſh the wilful and obſtinate, and impenitent, who renounced or rejected his name, his goſpel, and his ſalvation.

3. This Jeſus Chriſt, riſen from the dead, is the prime foundation of our moſt glorious expectations, *It is the pattern and pledge of our final hope and bleſſedneſs:* 'Becauſe I 'live, ye ſhall live alſo,' ſaith our bleſſed Lord. John xiv. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 20, 49. 'Where I am, there ſhall my ſervant be. 'Now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and be- 'come the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept: As 'we

'we have born the image of the earthy, ſo 'ſhall we alſo bear the image of the heavenly.' 2 Cor. iv. 14. 'Knowing that he which 'raiſed up the Lord Jeſus, ſhall raiſe up us 'alſo by Jeſus, and ſhall preſent us with 'you.' John xii. 26. See more. John xiv. 3. 'I go to prepare a place for you, that 'where I am, there ye may be alſo.' Eph. ii. 5, 6. 'Even when we were dead in ſins, 'God hath quickened us together with Chriſt, 'and hath raiſed us up together, and made us 'ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt 'Jeſus.'

Occaſional reflection. If you are furniſhed with convincing arguments that Jeſus Chriſt is riſen from the dead, then you may be aſſured your religion is true; though there may be twenty little cavils that you cannot eaſily anſwer: You may be aſſured alſo, that all the bleſſings of this religion are provided and ready for his faithful followers.

Is it certain that Jeſus is riſen from the dead? Then my ſins are fully atoned for, and forgiven, if I truſt in him, and give myſelf up to him. Rom. viii. 33, 34. 'Who 'ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's 'elect? It is God that juſtifieth: Who is he 'that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, 'yea rather, that is riſen again, who is even 'at the right-hand of God, who alſo maketh 'interceſſion for us;' *i. e.* as appears from the

the foregoing verſes, for all thoſe who believe or truſt in CHRIST.

Then he hath all power to ſanctify and ſave me, if I commit myſelf into his hands. Eph. i. latter end, and ii. 1, 5, 8. 'You 'hath he quickened who were dead in treſ- 'paſſes and ſins. We are quickened toge- 'ther with Chriſt, and ſaved by his grace:' *i. e.* We who have truſted in Chriſt, Eph. i. 12.

Then I ſhall *be raiſed from the dead*, as ſure as if it were done already; for he is the pledge and pattern of the reſurrection of all his followers. Rom. viii. 11. 'If the Spirit 'of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead 'dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from 'the dead ſhall alſo quicken your mortal 'bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

O happy ſouls, who have given up themſelves ſincerely to this all-ſufficient Saviour, and can apply theſe conſolations to themſelves, which are written in 1 Cor. xv. in many glorious and comfortable expreſſions.

Third obſervation. *Paul would not have affirmed Jeſus Chriſt, who was dead, to be alive again, without very good proof of it.*

Here theſe two things are to be conſidered, or enquired:

1. *Why Paul would not have affirmed it without juſt grounds.*

2. *What*

2. *What particular reaſons Paul had to believe it; or what good proof he had of it.*

Enquiry the firſt. Why Paul would not have affirmed it without juſt grounds: Theſe are ſome of the conſiderations to make this evident; *viz.*

1. *He was a man of good natural parts*, of great ſagacity, as well as good learning, *and he could not ſo eaſily have been impoſed upon in a thing of that importance, which was done in his own country, and the chief city of it, in his own day and time*, and when he had abundant opportunities to have ſearched into the truth or falſehood thereof, and this whole nation was ſet upon the ſearch and ſevereſt ſcrutiny into it.

Now that he was a man of parts and knowledge, the good ſenſe and reaſoning which appears in his writings, ſufficiently teſtify this character.

He was a young man when he was converted, and he was brought up in Jeruſalem, at the feet of Gamaliel: He muſt have great opportunities of enquiring concerning the hiſtory of the life, doctrine, and death of Chriſt, and of the report of his reſurrection among his own countrymen.

2. *He ſeems to be a very ſincere and faithful honeſt* man: This his whole conduct ſhews, if we conſider: He appears to have an honeſt zeal for his religion whilſt he was a Phariſee as well as afterward; diligently and

and openly purſuing what he profeſſed: No flaw was found in his morals: No charge of hypocriſy. Acts xxiii. 1. 'I have lived in 'all good conſcience unto this day.' Nor are his morals impeached by his worſt adverſaries.

3. *He was once a fierce and violent enemy to Jeſus Chriſt, and his name, and his goſpel, and his followers.* Gal. i. 13. 'I perſecuted 'the church of God, and waſted it.' Acts xxvi. 11. 'And being exceedingly mad a-'gainſt them, I perſecuted them even unto 'ſtrange cities.' 1 Tim. i. 13. 'Who was 'before a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, and 'injurious.' This was ſufficiently witneſſed by his own countrymen the Jews.

It hath been ſometimes ſaid by unbelievers, that teſtimonies of the reſurrection of Chriſt came only from his friends, and that you have none of the Heathens, or profeſſed Jews, bear witneſs to it. Here is a profeſſed Jew, and a violent enemy to Chriſtianity, who bears ſtrong and conſtant witneſs to it. But it could never be ſuppoſed that he ſhould continue an enemy and an unbeliever of Chriſtianity, after he believed that Chriſt was riſen from the dead, and thereby ſo evidently proved that he was the true Meſſiah.

4. *He ſpent his whole life afterwards with much zeal and fatigue, in publiſhing this truth*, that Jeſus Chriſt was riſen from the dead, and the doctrines which depend on it. He preached

preached this goſpel to a multitude of towns and cities among the Heathens, who were utter unbelievers, beſides his vindicating this doctrine always among the unbelieving Jews.

5. *He expoſed himſelf to perpetual dangers and difficulties, and to many ſevere perſecutions, by affirming it, and even to death itſelf;* and that without any hope of riches, honours, or pleaſures, in this world. Acts xx. 23, 24. 'The Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in 'every city, ſaying, that bonds and afflic- 'tions abide me, but none of theſe things 'move me; neither count I my life dear 'unto myſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my 'courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which I 'have received of the Lord, to teſtify the 'goſpel of the grace of God.'

Now put all theſe things together, and can it be ſuppoſed that any man, a wiſe, an ingenious, and learned man, faithful and ſincere, an enemy to Chriſtianity, and of the name of Chriſt, ſhould be ſo effectually convinced of the truth of the doctrine of Chriſt, and of the facts which ſupport it, as to ſpend his life in preaching this goſpel, and to die for it, if he had not abundant ground to believe it. And if Paul believed it with ſuch evidence, we may venture to believe it too.

DIS-

DISCOURSE II.

The DIVINE COMMISSION of St. PAUL Examined and Eſtabliſhed.

The Second Part of this SERMON:

ON

Acts xxv. 18, 19.

Of one Jeſus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

SECONDLY: The next thing to be enquired is, *What ſpecial and particular reaſons Paul had to believe the reſurrection of Chriſt, and thus conſtantly to preach it?*

Here I ſhall not run through all the various proofs of the reſurrection of Chriſt, which are often ſummed up together on this occaſion; but only mention thoſe which convinced St. Paul, and gave him this full aſſurance, that Jeſus was riſen from the dead.

1. He

1. He ſaw *Jeſus Chriſt after his reſurrection, and ſpake with him more than once.* Acts ix. 4, 5. 'And a voice ſaid unto him, 'Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? And he 'ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord 'ſaid, I am Jeſus, whom thou perſecuteſt.' And xxii. 17. 'While I prayed in the tem-'ple, I ſaw him, ſaying unto me, Make 'haſte, &c.' 1 Cor. xv. 4—8. 'He was 'ſeen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after 'that, of above five hundred brethren at 'once; after that, he was ſeen of James; 'then of all the apoſtles; and, laſt of all, 'he was ſeen of me alſo.' He appeals to this ſight of Chriſt, for the truth of the reſurrection of Chriſt.

It belongs to the character of an apoſtle, that he muſt be one who had ſeen the Lord; therefore he partly proves his apoſtleſhip that way. 1 Cor. ix. 1. 'Am not I an apoſtle? 'Have I not ſeen Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord?'

The firſt time he ſaw Chriſt, after his reſurrection, was on the road to Damaſcus, when there were ſeveral with him accompanying him on the road, who were alſo ſurpriſed with the deſcending glory, though they were not permitted to hear the words. He ſaw him again, Acts xxii. 17, 18, 21. when Chriſt ſent him to preach to the Gentiles.

2. *He felt a wonderful change in himſelf, both in his body and his ſoul, after he had the firſt*

firſt viſion of Chriſt: He was ſtruck blind, and after three days had his ſight reſtored, by the laying on of the hands of Ananias, a Chriſtian, according to the viſion which was given him. Acts ix. 8, 18. He had a new ſcene of things ſet before his underſtanding, even the whole ſcheme of Chriſtianity. Some ſuppoſe that, in the three days of his blindneſs, he was taught the goſpel. And accordingly it is ſaid, Acts ix. 20, 22. 'That he ſtraightway preached Chriſt in 'the ſynagogues, that he is the Son of God.' Gal. i. 1. 'Paul, an apoſtle, not of man, 'nor by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt.' He had a new heart given him, and was made a new man. 'I received it not of man, 'nor by man, nor was I taught it but by 'the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt. God called 'me by his grace, and revealed his Son in 'me.' Gal. i. 11, 15, 16. *And of an enemy he became a friend, and preacher of the goſpel.* Gal. i. 11—16, 23.

3. *He found ſtrange powers communicated to him, and he could ſpeak many unknown languages, and gave this gift of tongues to other men; he could heal the ſick with a touch of his hand, or a word of his mouth:* He could make the lame to walk, as at Lyſtra; Acts xiv. 8, 10. and ſtrike men blind with a reproof; ſo Elymas, Acts xiii. 11, 12. and could raiſe the dead; ſo Eutychus, Acts xx. 10, 12. And beſides all this, he had

had a power of communicating theſe miraculous and healing gifts to Chriſtians; which eminently appears among the Corinthians; to which he appeals in his diſputes with them, 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

Now was it poſſible for a man who felt ſuch amazing changes wrought in him, and ſuch amazing powers communicated to him by Jeſus Chriſt, to doubt whether Chriſt was riſen from the dead, whether Jeſus were alive or no? Or would God have communicated ſuch powers to a man, who went about to preach the reſurrection of Chriſt, if Chriſt had never been raiſed from the grave? Would God have afforded ſuch favours to a man who preached the Chriſtian religion, if it had not been true, and approved of God?

Nor could St. Paul be deceived in his frequently exerciſing theſe powers, nor could he deceive others by pretending to them, nor could he appeal to men who enjoyed them, if he had not received them and beſtowed them. He appeals, in his public epiſtles to the Corinthians and Romans, two large aſſemblies in two noted cities, Rom. xv. 18. 2 Cor. xii. 11. Theſe letters were to be read by the churches, and they publiſhed his vindication. And let it be obſerved too, that ſeveral among the Corinthians were his profeſſed adverſaries, and had ſet themſelves up againſt him, and endeavoured to deny his apoſtleſhip. 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2. *If I be not an apoſtle to others, I am*

unto you; for ye are the ſeal, or proof, of my apoſtleſhip, by receiving divine gifts from me.

4. *Upon cloſer examination of the Bible, St. Paul found, that Chriſt's riſing from the dead was agreeable to the revelations that God had made to mankind in former ages, agreeable to the prophecies of the prophets his predeceſſors, and particularly agreeable to the explications of thoſe ſcriptures by his forefathers,* and the promiſes contained in his own native religion, and in the books which teach it; Acts xiii. 30——37. and eminently in that great type and figure of him, Jonah the prophet, who lived again after he had lain three days and nights in the belly of the whale, in the heart of the ſea, Matt. xii. 39, 46. which was fulfilled in the reſurrection of Chriſt.

5. *By conferring with others of his own nation, and his own religion, who were well acquainted with Jeſus Chriſt in his life-time, he found the ſame truth confirmed by them; for they had ſeen Jeſus Chriſt, and eat and drank with him after he roſe from the dead:* So Peter and James, as Gal. i. 18, 19. And they confirmed the ſame doctrine by their teſtimony to him, and by gifts and miracles, as well as by their own perſonal knowledge.

6. *He ſaw the bleſſed and amazing effects of the reſurrection of Chriſt among the Gentiles, who were once groſsly ignorant idolaters, devoted to groſs ſuperſtitions, ſlaves to every luſt, and given up to all abominations*; as they are deſcribed

deſcribed Rom. i. 18, &c. Gal. iv. 8. Eph. iv. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 11. But they were changed by this goſpel, and made new creatures.

Before I proceed any further, I would make two or three *Remarks.*

Rem. 1. *Which of all the infidels of the Jewiſh or Heathen nations, which of all the unbelievers and apoſtates in a Chriſtian land, ever could pretend to bring ſuch powerful and convincing arguments againſt the reſurrection of Chriſt, as St. Paul had for it?* Who hath ever attempted or preſumed to prove that Jeſus Chriſt continues ſtill among the dead, by ſuch effectual arguments as Paul had to prove that he is alive? St. Paul's own reaſon exerciſing itſelf on theſe arguments, could not reſiſt the power of them, but he became a captive to the force of this reaſoning, and a rational believer, and a zealous preacher of a riſen Jeſus.

Rem. 2. *How neceſſary it is for Chriſtians, whoſe life and hopes depend on the New Teſtament, to be well ſatisfied that St. Paul was in the right, and that St. Paul's doctrine is true.* For it is evident, that a great part of our religion, at leaſt in the clearneſs, and fulneſs, and glory of it, is derived from his writings. His writings make up near half the New Teſtament.

Many of the articles of our religion would be leſs plain, and more doubtful, if we did not borrow light from St. Paul's writings. Many

a comfortable expreſſion which our ſouls reſt upon would be loſt and uſeleſs to us, if we are not ſatisfied of the truth of what St. Paul tells us, as one commiſſioned by our riſen Saviour. Many a ſweet and powerful promiſe, on which Chriſtians have lived and died, would loſe its ſweetneſs and its force, if we doubt of the truth and authority of the epiſtles of Paul.

What would ſome of you have done without ſeveral chapters, and many verſes in them? as Rom. iv. and v. 8, 12, 14. I mean particularly with regard to the doctrine of original ſin, derived from Adam, and the ſalvation by Chriſt, his prieſthood, his royalty, and the uſe and benefit of afflictions, Heb. xi. xii. &c. Our reſurrection from the dead, and our eternal happineſs, 1 Cor. xv. and 1 Theſſ. iv. and many others?

And of how great advantage is it to us, that St. Paul has foretold, in plain language, the riſe and characters of Antichriſt, 2 Theſſ. ii. 3—12. and the deſtruction of that ſtate, to forewarn us, and to give us comfortable hopes and expectations?

It is a matter therefore of great and heavenly importance, for us Chriſtians to be well eſtabliſhed in the belief of St. Paul's converſion, his faith, and his apoſtleſhip, and for this end we ſhall do well to remember theſe proofs and arguments which convinced him that Jeſus was riſen from the dead. Other holy

holy writers have told us more of the life, actions, death, and reſurrection of Chriſt, in the particular circumſtances thereof; but St. Paul has told us more of the bleſſed conſequences of theſe tranſactions.

And let it be always kept in mind by us, that he was in a ſpecial manner the apoſtle to the Gentile nations, of which Great Britain is a large province, and a remarkable part; ſo that, in his writings he ſpeaks directly to us, and we are bound to attend to him.

Rem. 3. *It is very reaſonable to conclude, we may ſafely believe what St. Paul believed and taught about this ſubject of the reſurrection of Chriſt.* For if we have but reaſon to believe that this was Paul's character, faith, and practice, and theſe are the reaſons of his belief, what ſhould diſcourage or ſtagger us?

Let us ſum up the force of this argument, and put it together.

Here is a wiſe, learned, ſincere, honeſt man, bred up a Phariſee, in a ſtrong oppoſition to Chriſt, and the doctrine of his reſurrection, zealous for another religion, even the religion of his fathers and his country, who yet ſaw reaſon to renounce all his ancient prejudices, and ſubmit to receive this new and ſtrange doctrine, who believed and profeſſed this goſpel, which he once grievouſly perſecuted, and afterwards preached it, with much fatigue, danger, and ſuffering,

ſupported it with courage, and conſtant divine zeal and piety, and the practice of every virtue; through his whole life, gloried in his perpetual ſufferings for it, lived upon the comforts derived from it, died in defence of it, and ſealed it with his blood, and left it as a chief treaſure to thoſe whom he loved beſt in this world, even to the churches of Chriſt.

Now we have not this account of Paul from mere hearſay and tradition, but we have his own teſtimony to all this in his writings, which have been delivered down to us through many ages: And no man of ſenſe can reaſonably doubt whether they are his writings or no, any more than we can doubt the writings of Julius Cæſar, or Seneca, Livy, or Virgil. I add this further: Concerning the vigour and ſpirit of his writings, and the force of argument contained in them, we have the teſtimony of ſome of his greateſt adverſaries, as he himſelf repreſents the caſe. *His letters*, ſay they, *are weighty and powerful*, and he was not aſhamed to appeal to themſelves, and threaten them, that he would make it appear that his practice towards them ſhould have as much force and power as his letters had, when he came the ſecond time to viſit them, 2 Cor. x. 10, 11. And we have the teſtimony of two others, particularly Luke the phyſician, in his hiſtory of the Acts of the Apoſtles, who was a fellow-traveller with him;

him; and Peter, who was another of his countrymen, in his epiſtles, bears witneſs to him, and to his writings; beſides the teſtimony of all the Chriſtian writers from the beginning of Chriſtianity, 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. Which writings of St. Paul are dignified by St. Peter himſelf, with the name of the *ſcriptures*, ver. 16. they being both men inſpired by God, and of chief repute among the apoſtles.

I proceed now to enquire, *What were theſe bleſſed effects on men in the Heathen world, whereby Paul's doctrine of the reſurrection of Chriſt was further confirmed and eſtabliſhed.*

And here I might talk largely of the idolaters that were turned from their ſuperſtitions to the worſhip and love of the true God, of their abandoning their former vices, and their ſuperſtitious and ſinful cuſtoms of their nations, and the reformation of their lives and manners, to goodneſs and holineſs, &c. but I ſhall confine myſelf only to thoſe effects which bear a more apparent relation to the reſurrection of Chriſt; and ſuch are theſe that follow: *(viz.)*

1. *How many dead ſinners were made alive to God, and virtue, piety, and univerſal holineſs, by preaching this doctrine of the death and reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt?* What encouragement for hope of pardon for the worſt of ſinners in this bleſſed doctrine of a dying and a riſing Saviour? What an aſſurance of

full atonement made to the juſtice of God, in that Jeſus, who, in death, took our ſins upon him, is now diſcharged from the dead, and his diſmiſſion from the grave is a full token and proof of it. *He died for our offences, and roſe again for our juſtification*, Rom. iv. ult.

If Chriſt be yet under the pain of death, as the apoſtle argues, 1 Cor. xv. 17. and be not riſen; *then our faith is vain, we are yet in our ſins:* But if he be riſen, then our faith and hope are confirmed, and our ſins are atoned for, and our ſouls are pardoned, if we truſt in him.

O how many guilty conſciences are made eaſy, and that upon ſolid grounds, by the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead? He is a *God of peace, and reconciled to ſinners, who brought Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, by virtue of the blood of the everlaſting covenant*, Heb. xiii. 20. Rom. viii. 34.

Several of the dead ſaints aroſe after his reſurrection, and that by the virtue of it, Matt. xxvii. 53. as an emblem of the many dead ſouls that ſhould riſe from a death in ſins and treſpaſſes by the ſame influence, Eph. ii. 5, 6.

A riſen Saviour hath, according to the apoſtle's preaching, given them *repentance and remiſſion of ſins*, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. They are raiſed from a death in ſins, by virtue of the reſurrection of Chriſt.

2. *How*

2. *How many earthly, carnal, and ſenſual ſouls, have been made heavenly-minded by faith in a riſen Saviour?* Col. iii. 1. Many there are, who have felt the power of the word. 'If ye are riſen with Chriſt, ſet your affec-'tions on things above, where Chriſt ſitteth 'at the Father's right-hand.'

A riſen Jeſus calls the ſoul upward, and heavenward.

What have we here on earth worth living for, ſince Jeſus is riſen from the dead, hath left the world, and gone to heaven? Jeſus, our hope, our life, our eternal joy, Col. i. 27.

This goſpel of a riſen Saviour hath done more to refine the heart from earth, and fleſh, and ſenſuality, and the love of this world, and turn it to God, and things heavenly, than all the reaſonings of philoſophers through all ages, and in all nations. Compare the cities where they diſputed with the churches which Paul planted, and then judge.

3. *How many captives of Satan have been releaſed by the power of Jeſus, ſince his releaſe from the grave?* The devil had no power to hold Chriſt in the fetters of death, Acts xiii. 37, 38. and hath been forced to releaſe thouſands of his ſlaves by the authority of a riſen Jeſus, Col. ii. 15. 'And having ſpoiled prin-'cipalities and powers, he made a ſhew of 'them openly, triumphing over them in it.'

Pſalm

Pſalm lxviii. 18. 'Thou haſt received gifts 'for men, even for the rebellious, that the 'Lord God might dwell among them.' And Eph. iv. 8, 9, 13, 15. 'He led captivity cap-'tive, and gave gifts unto men, whereby 'they were made prophets, teachers, mini-'ſters, &c.'

4. *How many fearful and feeble creatures have grown bold and victorious in ſufferings, and have conquered death itſelf, by faith in a dying and riſing Saviour?* 'Thanks be to 'God, who giveth us the victory, through 'Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.' 1 Cor. xv. 57. How many believers have laid down their bodies in the duſt with ſweet ſatisfaction and joy, through faith in the reſurrection of Chriſt, and have triumphed over the grave? 'O death, Where is thy ſting? O grave, 'Where is thy victory?'

St. Paul had ſeen abundance of this work performed, through the nations where he planted the Chriſtian churches, and theſe wonders of ſalvation wrought among the Gentiles, by his preaching of Jeſus, and his reſurrection; and every one of theſe wonders confirmed his belief, that Jeſus who was dead, is now alive.

A General REMARK *on this Head.*

It greatly confirms our holy religion, when we hear of theſe bleſſed effects of the reſur-

rection

rection of Chriſt in other perſons; but our own perſonal hope muſt be eſtabliſhed by feeling theſe effects in ourſelves.

Enquire into your own ſtate under theſe four particulars laſt-mentioned. Search into your own ſouls, what have every one of you felt of theſe bleſſed and divine effects; and let not this diſcourſe only confirm your faith, but let it awaken and raiſe your hearts to a ſhare of holy and perpetual joy.

Some General Meditations, *drawn from the Text and Diſcourſe.*

1. However it hath been, and however it is, a ſhameful matter of doubt and enquiry among *infidels* in a Chriſtian land, in our world, whether Jeſus, who was put to death, be alive or no, *yet it is no matter of doubt or enquiry in the world above, or the world beneath, in heaven or in hell.* There his dominion and power are well known: Nor will it be any matter of doubt hereafter in our world, when he that was dead ſhall come in his Father's name, veſted with power, and enthroned in glory, to judge the unbelieving nations, and all the ſons of infidelity. He was once unknown in this world, living and dying, but will not be ſo for ever, 1 Jo. iii. 1. The great enquiry between Paul and his adverſaries was about this ſtrange perſon; it was of one Jeſus, who is ſpoken of as an unknown

known man. And he was ſo for a time, but it will not be ſo for ever. The world once knew him not, John i. 10. but he ſhall be moſt remarkably and illuſtriouſly manifeſted one day.

2. *How little mention ſoever was made of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, and eſpecially of the doctrines derived thence, in his own preaching in public while he lived;* yet theſe are evidently and continually inſiſted on in the preaching of his apoſtles, as things of the greateſt moment in Chriſtianity. Let not theſe things therefore be ſtrange or unheard of in our miniſtration of this goſpel, ſince it is built upon them.

It was not proper that Chriſt ſhould too freely publiſh theſe things to the world, when they had not been actually tranſacted among men, nor was it ſo fit that he ſhould ſpeak ſo particularly of the conſequences and effects of them, when they were not actual facts, yet he gave ſufficient notice to the world, and much more to his diſciples by way of prophecy, that they might expect them. And as he did not talk of theſe events freely and publickly, ſo he could not ſo properly talk of the conſequent bleſſings of them. This was left to be done by his apoſtles, after thoſe events were come to paſs. 'Many things I have to 'ſay,' (ſays our bleſſed Lord) 'but ye cannot 'bear them yet,' John xvi. 12.

3. Let us remember, that *whatſoever advantages*

vantages or bleſſings we can derive from the death of Chriſt, they all depend on his reſurrection. His being dead will be of no avail to our ſouls, either for pardon, or ſanctification, or future happineſs, unleſs he be riſen again, 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17. 'If Chriſt be not 'riſen, then is our preaching vain, and your 'faith is alſo vain; ye are yet in your ſins.' Rom. iv. 25. 'Jeſus, who was delivered for 'our offences, and was raiſed again for our 'juſtification.' When we meditate on a dying Saviour in any of his ordinances, let us remember, *the Lord is riſen;* he hath fulfilled that dreadful atonement for ſin in his death; he is accepted of his Father; and he has thereby manifeſted, that there is a way opened for the pardon of ſin, and our ſalvation. He hath conquered death and the devil; he hath laid a foundation for our riſing from the grave; he will fulfil in heaven what he hath began on earth; his throne ſhall conſummate the work of his croſs. 'If 'when we were ſinners we were reconciled 'by his death, how much more, being recon-'ciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life,' Rom. v. 10.

4. If Jeſus, being dead, and alive again, is ſo momentous a point, ſo important an article in our religion, then we may remark, *that ſome of the chief evidences of the truth of our religion, are nearly connected with ſome of the chief glories, benefits, and excellencies of it;* for

for they are all built on this ſame foundation, even the reſurrection of our bleſſed Lord. Theſe are not merely ſtrange pieces of hiſtory, but ſuch doctrines are built on them, which are the life of our ſouls.

The reſurrection of Chriſt confirms our religion: *Firſt*, As it gives ſufficient proof that God, whoſe prerogative it is to raiſe from the dead, approves what Jeſus taught: And *Secondly*, As Jeſus Chriſt himſelf foretold his own reſurrection; as I ſaid before.

And it lays a foundation for ſome of the chief doctrines, bleſſings, and duties of our religion, which St. Paul preaches without end; *(viz.)* our truſt in this riſen Saviour, our faith in his interceſſion in heaven, and coming to God by him; our dependence on his government; our reſignation of ourſelves to him; our expectation of the Holy Spirit, and his graces, from him; our courage in death: and our joyful hope of a reſurrection and eternal life.

5. *What continual matter for holy meditation ſhould theſe two things furniſh us with*, (viz.) *the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, eſpecially in all our addreſſes to God?* Heb. x. 19. and iv. 14. How delightful and how encouraging are theſe ideas, in all our ſacred and religious tranſactions with God, in life and in death. *We have boldneſs to enter into the moſt holy place by the blood of Jeſus, and have ſuch an high-prieſt over the houſe of God*

God to introduce us. How divinely agreeable in all our behaviour, in our converſation in this world. Gal. vi. 14. By the death of Chriſt we are dead to this world, by the death of Chriſt *crucified to it, and the world crucified to us.* Col. iii. 1. We ſhould live as thoſe who are above, whoſe hearts are on high, *where Chriſt is at the right hand of God.*

Under our carnality and earthly-mindedneſs let us govern ourſelves by theſe meditations. Let us remember *we are dead to ſin.*

Under all our temptations to ſin, Rom. vi. 2. let us be upon our guard, remembering our being united to Chriſt, *in his death and his life.*

If at any time we fall under doubts of the truth of our religion, let us look up to a riſen Jeſus. What better ſupports can we have under all our afflictions, ſorrows, fears, weakneſſes? Rev. i. 18. *He, who was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore. Amen.* Under the apprehenſions of death; 1 Cor. xv. *Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory over death and the grave by a living Chriſt.* O what a ſhame is it for profeſſors of a dying and a riſen Saviour to be dead-hearted in religion, which is our ſublimeſt hope; to be carnally-minded, or to be afraid of death?

6. *If Jeſus being dead, and being alive again is ſo great and important an article of our religion, and as it were the foundation on which it ſtands, then*

then how wiſely hath he ordered it in his goſpel, that we ſhould have a conſtant memorial appointed us both of his death and his reſurrection? Of his death in the Lord's ſupper; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. *and of his reſurrection in the Lord's day?* Rev. i. 10. it is the riſing of Chriſt that gives a bleſſed name to this day, Acts xx. 7. John xx. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. On the firſt day of the week Chriſt appears in his holy ordinances, and ſaith, *Peace be unto you*, as he did to the apoſtles.

The primitive Chriſtians celebrated both theſe inſtitutions on every firſt day of every week; that is, the Chriſtian Sabbath, and the Lord's Supper.

We all agree to celebrate one of theſe, *viz.* his reſurrection, every week on the firſt day; but how few are there that celebrate the memorial of his death in a conſtant attendance at the Lord's Supper, in compariſon of the multitudes, who call themſelves Chriſtians?

O let us take pleaſure in theſe ſacred memorials, and practiſe them both with ſteadineſs and conſtancy, in remembrance of Jeſus, who was dead, and is alive.

Let us remember at the Lord's Supper a dying Saviour, and call to mind the great deſigns of his death, as many as we can; *(viz.)* to witneſs the truth of his goſpel; to fulfil ancient predictions of his death and his reſurrection; to teach us to die as an example; but, above all, to make atonement for

for our ſins, and lay a foundation for pardoning grace, and our hope of acceptance with God.

Let us remember every Lord's day to raiſe our thoughts to the heavenly world; where Jeſus is at the Father's right-hand, Col. iii. 1, 2.

7. *Let us reflect on this delightful circumſtance of our own death, and the new life of Chriſt, that, in both theſe, he was our pattern and forerunner*, 2 Tim. ii. 8, 10—13. *If we die with him we ſhall alſo live with him*, Heb. vi. 20.

Muſt we lie down in death? Jeſus, the Son of God, went through the dark valley before us, and lay down in the grave, and ſanctified it to us for a ſleeping place, 1 Theſſ. iv. 13—18. His death was attended with much more terror from God and man than ours is or can be. His death hath taken away the ſting from ours.

Did Jeſus riſe again from the dead? So ſhall we, if we are his ſincere followers. He is our Head, *the firſt-born from the dead;* Col. i. 15. *and our example*, Rom. viii. 11. *The ſame Spirit ſhall quicken us*, whatſoever nation ye lived in, Rome, or Jeruſalem, Aſia, or Corinth, or Great-Britain, or in what age ſoever! 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23, 49. 2 Cor. iv. 14. And it will be a divine joy to meet holy Paul, our great apoſtle, and our teacher, among the holy ſaints, who

has gone through ſo many deaths and dangers, to acquaint us with this goſpel.

Was it ſo ſtrange a thing to tell us, that one dead man, even Jeſus, ſhould be alive again after his death? How ſtrange and glorious a ſight will it be, when all the dead in Chriſt, thouſands and ten thouſands, ſhall be made alive, with their Lord Jeſus at the head of them. *Rejoice for ever in the Lord*, and comfort yourſelves with this divine conſolation. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE III.

The Difference between the LAW and the GOSPEL:

IN

Several SERMONS preached at Bury-ſtreet, December, 1731.

Gal. iii. 21, 22.

Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid: For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law: But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.

I HAVE long had a deſign to explain this text to you, becauſe it ſeems to be a key whereby we are let into the ſenſe and meaning of this apoſtle, in his long and laboured arguments about the *law* and *goſpel*, in his

epiſtles to the Romans and the Galatians, and in the conſtant diſtinction that he there obſerves between them.

Theſe Galatians, who were converted to the faith of Chriſt, had been cloſely beſet by ſome zealous Judaizing Chriſtians, who would fain have had them circumciſed, and engaged to keep the Jewiſh law, Chap. vi. 12, 13. The apoſtle, who well underſtood the liberty of the goſpel, would not ſuffer them to be thus impoſed upon; and therefore he argues, he allures, he threatens, he denounces, he uſes all the proper methods of an apoſtle, and a preacher of Chriſtianity, to eſtabliſh them in the *liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free*, and to guard them againſt yielding a title of compliance with the Jewiſh ceremonies and bondage.

He ſhews them, in this chapter, that the *promiſe* was given to Abraham, the great believer, with all the bleſſings of ſalvation contained in it, and to all thoſe who imitate his faith, by truſting in the goſpel of Chriſt; for they are *the ſeed of Abraham*, ver. 8, 9. And the law curſes and condemns ſinners; Gal. iii. 10. but it does not, it cannot ſave them, ver. 11. And that *the law, which came in four hundred years after* the promiſe to Abraham, could not *diſannul the promiſe, or make it of none effect*. The *queſtion* ariſes then in the 19th verſe; *To what end then ſerveth the law?* The *anſwer* is, To ſhew them their ſins,

sins, and to keep alive a sense of sin among them, till Christ should come, who was to remove sin: Then comes in the *objection* of my text, *Is not the law then against the promises?* Is not the *promise to Abraham* contradicted by the *law given to the Jews?* No; by no means; for they were designed for two different purposes. The law was given for special and peculiar reasons in this life, to the Jews: The *promise* was given to Abraham, and, through him, to all Gentile, as well as Jewish *believers*, for eternal life. Whereas, 'if there had been a law given which could 'have given life, *i. e. eternal life*, verily righ-'teousness should have been by the law: But 'the scripture hath concluded all under sin, 'that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ 'might be given to them that believe.'

Let us first examine the meaning of the *words* and *phrases* in my text.

Quest. 1. What is meant by *law in general*, and *the law here spoken of in particular?*

Answ. A *law* is the will of a superior, signified to us, or laid within the reach of our knowledge; which, if we obey, we are pronounced righteous, and obtain a right to any blessings promised to the obedient; but if we disobey we are guilty, and are laid under a sentence of condemnation. I say, the will of a superior, *signified to us*, or *laid within our reach*, because the Gentiles, *having not the* revealed *law* of God, *are a law to them-*

ſelves; becauſe the great and general rules of it, are ſo far written in their hearts and conſciences, as that they might be found out by reaſon and diligence, and honeſt enquiry; and in this ſenſe they are ſet within our reach.

A law of God requires that the obedience of the creature be *perfect*, *without defect*, perſevering to the end of the time which God hath appointed; and it muſt be alſo *perſonal*, or performed by himſelf, not by a ſurety or ſubſtitute. *A law of God* is ſuch a conſtitution of God, as pronounces righteous thoſe who fully comply with all its requirements; but it accepts of no leſs than it requires, nor does it own any thing for *righteouſneſs* which is not perfect, Rom. ii. 7. 'Who by patient 'continuance in well doing' (Greek, continuance in a good work, or in working good) 'ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality, 'eternal life.' Gal. iii. 12. 'The man that 'doth them ſhall live in them.' Jam. ii. 10. 'For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and 'yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.'

The Jewiſh *law* given at Sinai is the particular law here meant in the firſt part of the verſe: The law *which was given four hundred years after the promiſe;* even the whole *law of Moſes*, given to the Jewiſh nation.

Queſt. 2. What is this *promiſe?*

Anſw. The promiſe to Abraham, that all the *nations ſhould be bleſſed in him:* That he and

and his seed should be heirs of an inheritance, and that God *should be their God.* It is, in short, the *gospel of salvation* contained in the promise given to Abraham, see Gal. iii. 8. 'The scripture foreseeing that God 'would justify the Heathen through faith, 'preached before the gospel unto Abraham, 'saying, In thy seed shall all nations be bless-'sed.' And it is called the promise, to distinguish it from the *law of Sinai*, and indeed from all *proper laws:* For as I shall shew, the *gospel* does not save us in the way of a *law;* and therefore it is not a *proper law.*

Quest. 3. What is meant by the *law's giving life?*

Answ. The word is ζωοποιησαι, which more naturally signifies *quickening*, or *bringing a dead thing into life*, by putting spirit or life into it, or by making it active in a vital manner: And so it might seem to imply giving new spiritual life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. But the whole context rather constrains us to construe it, *the giving a title to eternal life and happiness to men in a judicial or legal manner.* This no law of God can do, as the apostle here asserts.

Quest. 4. What is meant by *righteousness?*

Answ. A *justifying righteousness*, or a sentence of justification, a rectitude in the court of God, a freedom from punishment, and a right to life, which is the natural and proper effect of perfect obedience to any law of

of God given to men. But this bleſſing may be given alſo in another way, *(viz.)* by the free grace of God, without any ſuch obedience or righteouſneſs of our own working.

Queſt. 5. What are we to underſtand by the *ſcripture concluding all under ſin?*

Anſw. It ſignifies that the ſcripture, or the word of God, declares that all mankind are ſinners, *there is none righteous, no, not one:* And, as ſinners, they are under a ſentence of condemnation by the law of God, whatſoever law they are under, whether the *law of nature*, or any *laws of revelation*: Foraſmuch as no man hath ever perfectly fulfilled any law that God had given him, and therefore all are come ſhort of juſtification and life; all are *fallen ſhort of the glory of God*, promiſed to obedience. See this at large, both declared, pronounced, and argued, Rom. iii. 9—20. *By the law ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified*, &c.

Queſt. 6. What is that *promiſe given by the faith of Chriſt to them that believe.*

Anſw. The promiſe of ſalvation, and the inheritance of heaven, typified by the land of Canaan, given originally and eminently to Abraham, and *his ſeed*, and continued to thoſe who are his ſpiritual ſeed, *(viz.)* who believe or truſt in Chriſt, who is the Meſſiah promiſed to Abraham: For by faith in Chriſt we are *made the children of Abraham*, Gal. iii. 29. *i. e.* as we are imitators of his faith, ſo we

we are invested in his benefits; *i. e.* those who imitate Abraham by trusting in the mercy of God through the Messiah, now he is come in the flesh, as Abraham trusted in him before he came, are accounted, in the sight of God, the children or posterity of Abraham, and are partakers of those blessings of the inheritance of eternal life, which was promised to Abraham, under types and figures of the land of Canaan: Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9, 29. And as Abraham was made a child of God by trusting in the ancient promise, so we are made the children of God by faith, or trusting in Jesus Christ the Messiah, Gal. iii. 26.

Having explained the words so particularly, I come to lay down these Observations.

I. Observ. *There is a constant and happy harmony between the several revelations of God to men.* The promise to Abraham, or the gospel proposed and preached to him, is not contrary to the law given by Moses to the Jews.

The *law* signifies the precepts of God, revealed or discovered to men, more particularly to the Jews.

The *gospel* is the promise of the special blessings of God revealed or discovered to men, particularly to Abraham of old, and to us in a plainer manner, in these latter days.

Here I shall shew, in the first place, that the *law* and *gospel*, *i. e.* the precept and the promise, cannot contradict one another; for they

they both run through all the different diſpenſations that ever God gave to the children of men ſince the fall.

Secondly, The *law* and *goſpel* do not contradict one another, for they are two different diſcoveries of the mind and will of God, made to men for very different purpoſes.

The *law*, ſince the fall of Adam, was given for the diſcovery or conviction of ſin, and to ſhew men not only their duty, but alſo, how exceeding ſinful their natures are, and how unable they are to fulfil their duties perfectly; and therefore to lay them under a ſenſe of guilt and condemnation. The *promiſe*, or *goſpel*, was given for the relief of guilty man, whom the law had condemned, and to provide a righteouſneſs, or juſtification, and life, for them, who, according to the law, had a ſentence of death paſſed upon them. Therefore the law is called the *miniſtration of condemnation and death*, and the goſpel the *miniſtration of the ſpirit and righteouſneſs*, or of juſtification and eternal life, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9.

I confeſs, if the law had been given for the ſame end as the goſpel, if the law had been given for man ruined and ſinful, to obtain life and ſalvation by it as well as the goſpel, then they might have been ſuppoſed to contradict one another, and the objection in my text had ſtood firm, and we could not have eaſily and fairly anſwered it; but ſince they

they are given for different purpoſes, they are but different revelations of God, which are made happily ſubordinate one to another, and their different ends and deſigns are both attained. The *law* convinces and condemns ſinners, and the *goſpel* relieves and pardons them, juſtifies and ſaves them, ſee Rom. iii. 20—22, &c. Gal. iii. 10—14.

Object. 1. But doth not St. Paul himſelf ſay, that the *law was ordained for life?* Rom. vii. 10.

Anſw. 1. Perhaps St. Paul might mean only to ſhew his former opinion, *that he thought it was ordained to give life*, Rom. vii. 10, 11, 13. But ſuppoſing this to be the real deſign of the words, it ſignifies no more than that the law was deſigned or ordained to give life and happineſs to every one that perfectly fulfilled it, Rom. ii. 7. and x. 5. But in Gal. iii. 10. 'Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written 'in the book of the law, to do them.' The law could have given life indeed to Adam, if he had continued to obey it; and the law could give life ſtill, if men were perfectly innocent, and perfectly obedient; for the law is not weak in itſelf, or unable to give life, but only through the infirmity of our fleſh, to fulfil the law ever ſince the fall of Adam, by whom ſin entered into our natures, and death entered into the world by ſin, Rom. viii. 3. 'What the law could not do, in that it was 'weak

'weak,' (not in itſelf,) but 'through the fleſh, 'God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of 'ſinful fleſh,' (and as a ſacrifice) 'for ſin, con-'demned ſin in the fleſh; that the righteouſ-'neſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who 'walk not after the fleſh but after the Spirit.'

Anſw. 2. The Jewiſh law was brought in to ſhew how tranſgreſſions abounded, Rom. v. 20. Gal. iii. 19. 'The law entered that ſin 'might abound,' or might appear to abound; 'for by the law is the knowledge of ſin,' Rom. iii. 20.

Object. 2. Were none of the Jews ſaved, to whom the law of Sinai was given, and who were under this law? Were not all of them condemned by it?

Anſw. Yes, they were all condemned by this law in the ſight of God, conſidered as the lord of ſouls or conſciences; for they all had broke it in ſeveral inſtances: Nor could the *ſervices* there required *purify their conſciences*, Heb. ix. 9. But ſeveral of them were ſaved by the promiſe to Abraham, *i. e.* by the goſpel, which was contained in the five books of Moſes, and was often intermingled with the declarations of the law: The promiſe to Abraham, or the goſpel, was not annulled but continued, eſtabliſhed and ratified by the revelations of Moſes, Gal. iii. 17. 'The law 'which was four hundred and thirty years 'after, cannot diſannul it, that it ſhould make 'the promiſe of none effect.' And Rom. iii.

21.

21. *The righteousness of faith*, or justification of the gospel, *as witnessed by the law and the prophets.* So Abraham was saved; so David; by the grace of God in the covenant of promise, Rom iv. 3, 6. But *not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no man living was or could be justified.*

Let us now recollect the explication of the words *law*, *giving life*, and *righteousness*, in short, that we may more easily apply the words in reading what follows, and so proceed to the next *Observation.*

Observ. II. *God would have appointed the justification of fallen man to have been by some law of his giving, if any law could have given such a poor sinful perishing creature justification, or a title to eternal life.*

And the *reasons* for it may be these.

1. Because *God is not wont to change his methods of government, where he sees them effectual to attain the ends of that government.* He is an unchangeable God, and doth not need second thoughts to mend his own first contrivances, or to change his conduct towards man, unless the case of his creatures and the nature of things require it. The law which was given at first to man in Paradise, and in innocency, had continued the same instrument of the government of God, if the case of fallen man had not required an alteration. But God was not willing all mankind, who were

were condemned by the law, ſhould be utterly ruined, and periſh in their folly; and therefore he changed his diſpenſation. The *law could not give life*, becauſe it required more than fallen man could perform; and therefore, through the weakneſs of man's fallen and corrupted nature, the law became uncapable of juſtifying man; *i. e.* it was weak to juſtify man by reaſon of the *fleſh*, and to pronounce a ſentence of righteouſneſs or juſtification on him, becauſe he was a feeble, guilty, diſobedient creature. He had ſinned already, and his paſſions and fleſhly appetites were too ſtrong for his reaſon, and are riſing up continually againſt the commands of the law, and therefore God brought in the goſpel, and gave a promiſe to our firſt parents as ſoon as they fell, and made his *goſpel* as well as his *law*, the inſtrument of governing his fallen creature man. 'There is for-'giveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be 'feared:' Pſal. cxxx. *i. e.* That there may be piety and religion maintained in the world.

2. If the law could have given life to fallen man, righteouſneſs or juſtification ſhould have been by the law, *that God might magnify this original law, and make it honourable.* This would have ſhewn it was not only a law fit to govern innocent man, but to recover fallen man too. The law hath a great glory in it, in that it is the tranſcript of the holy name of God; it is *holy, juſt, and good*, Rom.

Rom. vii. 12. And it would have been a great honour put on the law, if it could have recovered a ſinful ruined creation.

If fallen man could have performed this law, and anſwered the demands of it, here had been a glorious diſplay of all the wiſdom and majeſty, goodneſs and holineſs, which firſt made the law of God exemplified in the recovery of a poor, fallen, periſhing creature, by this law of his. But this could not be. *The law was weak*, and inſufficient for this purpoſe, *through the fleſh; i. e.* through the weakneſs of fallen man.

3. If the law could have given life, righteouſneſs ſhould have been appointed and obtained for fallen man by it; *becauſe God would never have been at the expence of a goſpel, if there had been no need of it, to recover fallen man, and to do that which the law could not do.* God does not lay out his thoughts or counſels, nor his riches of grace, in needleſs things, or in uſeleſs contrivances. Now if the law would have attained this end, *(viz.)* the juſtification and ſalvation of man, then the goſpel had been needleſs; then all theſe glorious riches of grace, and theſe counſels of wiſdom, and myſteries of mercy, had been in vain.

Surely if the law could have done this work, the bleſſed God would never have ſent his own Son out of his boſom, upon ſuch a long journey to this ſinful province of his dominion,

dominion, to this lower world, to take flesh and blood upon him, and to be exposed to sufferings and labours, reproaches and shame, pain and anguish, and death, if the law could have done the work of the salvation of man without it. God hath more value for the peace, and honour, and life of his Son, than to expose it at this rate; but it is plain from scripture, that the *Son of God was sent into the world to do that which the law could not do*, Rom. viii. 3. These treasures of wisdom and goodness, these riches of grace, which appear in the gospel, were all laid out to save a ruined creature, whom the law could not save; otherwise *Christ died in vain;* so the apostle saith expressly, Gal. ii. 21.

Observ. III. *No law could give life and salvation to poor fallen man.*

Here let it be considered, that all laws are either *moral*, *i. e.* drawn from the nature of God and the creature, or they are *positive; i. e.* such as are appointed merely by the will of God, for particular purposes, and in particular seasons or circumstances. Again *moral* laws are either such as belong to *all mankind in general*, *whether innocent or sinful*, or they are such as belong *only to sinful and fallen man.* Now none of all these sorts of laws can save sinful mankind. Let us prove it thus:

1. *Moral*

1. *Moral laws*, such as oblige all mankind in *general*, are contained in a due *love to God and man*, but fallen man can never be saved or justified by this law, because all these moral laws of God require perfect obedience, and cannot justify us without it. God is a most holy, a most wise, and righteous God, a most perfect being, and the relation between God and creatures, requires the creature should honour him, and obey him in perfection, and without any defect.

The *moral law* did require this perfection in the state of innocence; and, as it is taken into the constitution of the gospel, it does not diminish its requirements: It still requires perfection of obedience in all instances of thought, word, and deed, and that without any defect or intermission. The gospel doth not abate or lessen the requirements of the law, but it shews a way to relieve us when we have broken it, or cannot fulfil it, and the reasons are plain.

If the law did not now require perfection of obedience, but only sincere imperfect obedience, then the creature, if he were but sincere and honest, would have fulfilled the law, though he were not perfectly holy.

And then imperfection of obedience would have been, as it were, established by the law, if it could obtain salvation for fallen man.

Then also the imperfections of obedience to the law would not have been *sin;* for if

they were, they could not have made up a ſaving righteouſneſs.

The *goſpel* is a conſtitution of grace which accepts of leſs obedience from man than the law requires, and pardons the imperfect obeyer for the ſake of Chriſt the Mediator; but ſtill the law requires perfection, which mankind cannot pay. Now that man cannot pay it is evident, not only from the conſcience of every man in the world, for if it be awakened to ſee the extent of the law, it muſt condemn itſelf; but the ſcripture expreſsly aſſerts it in many places, 'There is 'none righteous, no, not one,' Rom. iii. 10. Eccl. vii. 20. 'There is not a juſt man on 'earth, that doeth good, and ſinneth not.' 2 Chron. vi. 36. 'There is no man who ſin-'neth not.'

2. Moral laws, ſuch as *belong only to ſinful man*, and oblige him, can never juſtify a ſinner, or ſave him. Let us enter into particulars.

The requirements thereof are *repentance* for ſin, *ſorrow* and *ſhame* for paſt follies, and a *diſpleaſedneſs* with ſelf for being guilty; *truſting or hoping* in the forgiving grace of God, *praying to him* for pardon and grace, and univerſal *watchfulneſs* againſt every temptation, under a ſenſe of former failings. This the very light of nature and reaſon teaches a ſinner, as well as the word of God requires

quires it. But this law cannot justify any creature, and that for two plain reasons.

(1.) Because *all our repentance, or new endeavours after obedience, cannot make atonement for our past sins.* A righteous governor doth not suppose that the tears, and sorrows, and repentance of criminals and malefactors, make any satisfaction to the public for his crimes, nor make due reparation to the government for his offences; nor are sufficient to procure pardon for criminals. A penitent criminal is often executed to fulfil the demands of the law, and to secure the authority of the government. And what trifling things are our sorrows, to answer for the dishonour done to the law of God our Maker.

(2.) Because *even our repentance itself, our hope or trust in grace, our prayer for mercy, our endeavours after new obedience, are all imperfect;* whereas the law requires a perfection even of this sort of duties, a perfect hatred of sin, a perfect displeasure with self on account of it, perfect sincerity in every thought, word, and action, and perfect watchfulness in guarding against temptation, and striving after new holiness. But how shamefully do we fail in these, and destroy our claims to justification and life, even if we were to be tried only by this part of the law which requires repentance at the hand of criminals: We see then that no moral law can justify us.

3. Let us come to *positive laws*, *i. e.* such rites, and forms, or ceremonies, as are appointed by the mere free will of God, for particular purposes; such as *sacrifices*, *circumcision*, *washings*, *baptism*, *the Lord's supper*, *&c.* These cannot justify us, because it is not in the power of any positive rites or ceremonies we can perform, to make up for the neglect of moral duties, or the violation of moral commands. They were never given for this end, nor appointed for this purpose. Heb. x. 1, 2, 5. 'It is not possible the blood 'of bulls and goats can take away sins.' Nor can *circumcision* cut off the vices of the heart. No nor can *baptism* wash us from our spiritual defilements. Nor can the *Lord's supper* give us spiritual life and nourishment. It is not outward performances of any kind can stand instead of real holiness, much less can they answer for our past iniquities. No law of *commandments*, *written in ordinances*, can give righteousness and life to a sinful creature; for they were never ordained for that end.

Quest. *What were they ordained for then?*

Answ. 1. To shew us what sinful and defiled creatures we are, who have need of such washings, &c. and to give intimations that we are worthy of death, who need such sacrifices by the death of so many living creatures, to make atonement for our sins, and to die in our room.

Answ.

Answ. 2. To give some typical hints that there is grace to be obtained of God, and there is a way for atonement for sin and salvation provided for sinful man.

4. The last reason why no laws can justify or save fallen man is this: *(viz.) All laws, whether moral or positive, may command; but they give no power to obey, and therefore cannot give life.* It is the promise that gives life. It is the gospel and grace of God that enables us to obey the law, even so far as the best of men do obey it in this life. The law commands, but it gives no strength to obey. Rom. v. 6. *When we were without strength Christ died for us*, to obtain life and strength, to yield obedience to the law from principles of faith and love. It is the gospel that brings spirit and life with it, to incline our hearts to obey the law. Gal. iii. 2. 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the 'law, or by the hearing of faith?' Heb. viii. 8, 10. 'This is the covenant I will make af-'ter those days, I will put my laws into their 'mind, and write them in their heart.'

Object. *But is it a righteous thing with God to give man a law which cannot be fulfilled, or perfectly obeyed by him?*

Answ. 1. It is righteous to give innocent man a law which at first he was well able to fulfil; and this law continues in its force and demands, though man hath lost his innocency, and by his wilful crimes hath rendered

himſelf unable to fulfil this law. The ſin of the creature, and his own rendering himſelf unable to fulfil his Maker's law, doth not make void the law of his Maker, and aboliſh its commands.

Simile. Suppoſe a ſervant hath an order from his maſter to carry a meſſage to his neighbour, if inſtead of going into the neighbour's houſe whither he was ſent, he goes into an alehouſe or tavern, there drowns his ſenſes and his natural powers in liquor, that he hath ſo weakened himſelf, that he can neither walk nor ſpeak; he can neither go to the place where he was ſent, nor deliver his meſſage: I would aſk, Doth his maſter's command ceaſe, or is his command aboliſhed? And is his authority at an end in this inſtance, becauſe his ſervant hath rendered himſelf incapable of fulfilling it, either with his feet or his tongue? This would be an eaſy way to cancel a maſter's laws and commands, if the wickedneſs of a ſervant could have this effect.

Now apply this to the caſe between God and man, and ſee whether God may not be juſtified in continuing his law in its perfection of demands, though man hath loſt or weakened his power to obey. Surely the moral law of God ſtands in force, requiring perfect obedience both of men and devils, and all intelligent beings, how feeble and impotent ſoever they have made themſelves by their own

own crimes: For it is a law that arises from the nature of God and the creature, and from the relation that is between them; and therefore it is an everlasting law.

Answ. 2. But God is still farther to be justified in this matter; for though man hath weakened himself by his fall, he hath not utterly lost his *natural* powers, his natural ability of obeying the law. He has an understanding, he has a freedom of will, to choose good and refuse evil; but his will is so obstinately bent upon sin, vanity, and folly, and his passions are grown so headstrong, that he will not give himself the trouble to subdue them: He willingly lets them bear him away from God: He is unwilling to obey; and this is called *a moral inability.* Now God may require such duties by his law, as thro' the weakness of the flesh, and the strength of appetite and passion, in this frail state man is *morally* or *immediately* unable to perform, though he hath a *remote* or *natural power.* An infinitely holy God cannot but command that we should never sin, never transgress the rule of righteousness, never break his pure and holy law; and yet, thro' the many infirmities of human nature, it is *morally impossible* we should perfectly keep this law, and live without sin. This Dr. Whitby himself (as much as he indulges the Arminian sentiments,) confesses in his Comment.

God therefore doth not loſe his authority or right of commanding perfect obedience and perfect holineſs, though man, by his folly and ſin, hath rendered his will averſe to God, and his evil appetites and paſſions ſtrong and ungovernable: So that, upon the whole, it is plain, the *law is holy*, *and juſt*, *and good*, and yet cannot pronounce any man righteous, nor adjudge him to eternal life.

DISCOURSE IV.

The Difference between the LAW and the GOSPEL:

The Second Part of this SERMON:

Gal. iii. 21, 22.

Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid: For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law. But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.

OBSERV. IV. *Scripture hath concluded all mankind under ſin*, hath *ſhut us* all up as priſoners under condemnation. Here I have nothing to do but to cite ſeveral texts of ſcripture, ſome of which have been before-mentioned, to prove that no man hath perfectly fulfilled the demands of the law, and conſequently, that all mankind lie under a ſentence

ſentence of condemnation, according to the law of God. James iii. 2. 'For in many 'things we offend all.' And ii. 10. 'Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet 'offend in one point, he is guilty of all,' becauſe he diſhonours that authority which hath enacted all. Rom. ii. 9, 10. 'Tribulation and 'anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth 'evil.' And iii. 9, 10, 19, 20, 23. 'Are we 'better than they? No, in no wiſe; for we 'have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, 'that they are all under ſin, as it is written, 'there is none righteous, no, not one. Now 'we know that what things the law ſaith, it 'ſaith to them who are under the law, that 'every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the 'world may become guilty before God. 'Therefore by the deeds of the law there 'ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight, for all 'have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory 'God.' Gal. iii. 10, 11. 'Curſed is every 'one that continueth not in all things written 'in the book of the law to do them: But 'that no man is juſtified by the law in the 'ſight of God, it is evident; for the juſt ſhall 'live by faith.'

A REMARK.

Here by the way we may take notice, what is *condemnation*, and what is *juſtification by the law of God.* It is the ſentence of God as

as it ſtands in the written law, or in the law of nature, pronouncing the creature, whether he be righteous or guilty, according to ſuch different characters which are found upon him. It is not any new act put forth by God himſelf toward his creatures, but the conſtant ſentence of his own law, declaring ſuch a perſon *righteous* according to his performance of the law, or ſuch a perſon *guilty* according to his non-performance of it. In like manner *juſtification by the goſpel* is not a new act in God, but the ſentence of his goſpel, pronouncing humble penitents and believers in *Chriſt* pardoned, forgiven, and accepted unto eternal life.

According to the different characters of men the word of God, *i. e.* his *law* or his *goſpel*, pronounces them guilty and condemned, or pardoned, juſtified, and accepted of God, unto eternal life. This is a very plain and eaſy doctrine to be apprehended by ſuch weak creatures as we are.

Obſerv. V. *Man who is condemned by the law may be ſaved by the promiſe; i. e.* by the promiſe of grace and reconciliation to God, which was given firſt to Adam, then to Abraham, and made further known to the people of God by Moſes, and David, and the prophets, according to the different revelations of God to man; but completed by the goſpel of Chriſt, and the miniſtry of his apoſtles.

A promiſe

A promiſe to Adam, of the *deſtruction of the works of the devil by the ſeed of the woman;* as it is explained 1 John iii. 8.

A promiſe that *God would be our God*, and give us an *inheritance*, made to Abraham, &c. Gen. xvii. 7, 8.

A promiſe confirmed by many types of the Jewiſh law. A promiſe of all the bleſſings of the new covenant, expreſſed Heb. viii. 8, 10. cited from the ſeveral prophets Jeremiah and Zechariah. 'This is the covenant 'that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael 'after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put 'my laws into their mind, and write them 'in their hearts: And I will be to them a 'God, and they ſhall be to me a people: For 'I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, 'and their ſins and their iniquities will I re-'member no more.' It is the ſame promiſe more particularly and fully ſet before us by Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, in his goſpel, and by his bleſſed apoſtles in their writings; which, in plain and expreſs language, includes in it not only pardon of ſin and reconciliation to God, but the ſanctification of our natures, and our preſervation to eternal life, in a ſtate of happineſs, which ſhall never end.

Obſerv. VI. *The way of obtaining an intereſt in theſe promiſed bleſſings is through faith.* It is to all that truſt in the grace of the goſpel, ſo far as it was manifeſted in the ſeveral ages of

of the world, *i. e.* to Adam, Abraham, and David; and as it is more fully manifested in and by Jesus Christ. It is obtained by a renouncing all claim by one's own works, and trusting in grace entirely.

If Adam was saved, it is in a way of grace and forgiveness through a Mediator, which was promised under the title of the *seed of the woman, who should bruise the head of the serpent;* and which was typified by sacrifices, and intimated by God's favourable dealings with Adam after his fall, and which promise was accepted and received by Adam's trusting or hoping in this grace.

If Abraham is saved, it is in a way of grace and forgiveness, which was promised under the title of that *seed of his, in whom all nations should be blessed;* and in that language of mercy, that *God would be his God*, and would *give him an inheritance;* of which Canaan was a type and figure. And *Abraham believed*, or *trusted in this, and it was imputed to him for righteousness;* Rom. iv. 3. *i. e.* unto his justification and acceptance.

If David was saved, it is in a way of grace and forgiveness. Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. 'Blessed 'is he whose transgression is forgiven, and 'whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man 'unto whom the Lord imputeth not ini-'quity,' Rom. iv. 6, 7.

If Christians are saved, it is in a way of grace and forgiveness still, which was promised

miſed to Abraham, which is revealed more particularly by Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, who came to confirm and to fulfil the former promiſes, and to obtain this pardon by the ſacrifice of himſelf. And by his own perfect obedience and ſufferings, he laid a foundation for the juſtification of ſinful creatures. If they are ſaved, it is not by their performing the law in any ſenſe, but by truſting in forgiving grace, revealed and manifeſted through Jeſus Chriſt. It is by truſting in another, and not in themſelves; as Rom. iv. explains, from ver. 17. to the 22.

It is not in a way of claim of righteouſneſs and eternal life, but in a way of humble dependence on grace. The *Phariſees boaſted, that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others.* The young ruler in the goſpel, ſpeaking of the law of God, ſaid, *All this have I kept from my youth.* The *Jews ſought for juſtification by the works of the law*, and rejected Chriſt, Rom. ix. 31. But St. Paul, by the ſight of *the law is dead to the law; i. e.* to all hopes of righteouſneſs and life by it; Gal. ii. 16, 19. and ſeeks to be pardoned, accepted, and juſtified, by truſting in what Chriſt hath done and ſuffered on his account.

And ſo all Chriſtians, Rom. iii. 22. And in this ſenſe the goſpel *juſtifieth the ungodly;* Rom. iv. 5. *i. e.* thoſe who have no righteouſneſs of their own to plead, whoſe beſt obedience is all defective.

Queſt.

Quest. *But doth this gospel save and justify a man that hath no regard to the law of God?* How is his obedience to the law or holiness secured, if a man be justified, or pronounced righteous, and acquitted of sin, and accepted to eternal life, by believing or trusting in the promises of grace? Surely many wicked men will say, "I trust in the promise of pardon "through Jesus Christ; and is this enough? "Is there no security that these believers shall "be obedient to the law as far as they can, "though they cannot obey it perfectly?"

Answ. Yes, there is abundant security for their diligence in duty to the law, though they can never work out a righteousness for themselves to be justified by the law. Let these reasons be considered:

1. *It is the great design of the gospel to restore us to holiness as well as to happiness;* and therefore the law, in the commands of it, runs through all the gracious dispensations of God to fallen man, as I have shewn you: And God will have no regard to them in a way of grace, who have no regard to his law in a way of obedience. The law constantly requires and points out our duty, it shews us our sin, it lays us under condemnation, and makes us seek a refuge in the gospel of forgiveness. Now the gospel is not prepared for such as knowingly and wilfully renounce the *law of God which is holy, and just*

juſt, and good, and who perſiſt in this practice, and abandon the commandments of it.

Can it be ever expected that the great God ſhould pardon and ſave thoſe rebels through Jeſus Chriſt, who knowingly and wilfully perſiſt in their rebellions? *God forbid.* The very light of nature will not ſuffer us to believe this. This would be *to make Chriſt the miniſter of ſin, and to build again the things which Chriſt came to deſtroy*, Gal. ii. 17, 18. For it is the deſign of all the bleſſings of the goſpel to make us conformable to God, and to this law, which is the unchangeable image of his holineſs. The great deſign of it is to make us practiſe love to God and our neighbour, which is *the fulfilling of the law* as far as our ſtate of frailty permits, Rom. xiii. 10.

The deſign of the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus, is that we *might be holy, and without blame before God, in love.* Are we choſen in Chriſt? It is that we may be holy, Eph. i. 4. Doth God forgive us? It is that we may fear, and love, and ſerve him, Pſalm cxxx. 4. *There is forgiveneſs with God, that he may be feared.* Are we redeemed with the blood of Chriſt? It is that we *might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Titus ii. 14. Doth the *grace of God bring ſalvation to us? It teaches us to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, to live righteouſly, ſoberly, and religiouſly, in this preſent evil world*, Titus ii. 11, 12.

We

We are under the law still unto Christ, as it is the rule whereby Christ governs his church, while he pardons their failures and imperfections: But we are not under the law, as it is the rule of judgment, and condemns all that have not fulfilled it. We are *freed from the curse of the law*, but not from the obligation to obedience. So the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 21. All believers have this freedom from the curse of the law, that from a new principle of holiness and love they may fulfil the commands of the law as far as our present circumstances will admit. Rom. vii. 6. 'But 'now we are delivered from the law, that 'being dead wherein we were held; that we 'should serve' God, not in the spirit of terror and bondage, but 'in newness of spirit, 'and not in the oldness of the letter,' by a new principle of holiness, wrought in us by the Spirit of God, as a principle of love and obedience.

2. *The gospel gives us encouragement and strength to fulfil the duties of the law*, and engages us to hope in God, that we may love him, please and serve him, as a forgiving and reconciling God, which the broken law, with all its commands, threatenings, and terrors, doth not, and could never do. The law speaks only condemnation and death. *As many as labour for life under the law, and would be justified by the law, are under the curse, and may despair of life*, Gal. iii. 10.

Now deſpair is no ſpring of obedience, and hopeleſs labour is very feebly and negligently performed; but hope is a powerful and laſting principle of holineſs. 1 John iii. 3. 'He that hath this hope in him, purifieth 'himſelf even as he is pure.' 1 Tim. iv. 10. 'Therefore we both labour and ſuffer re-'proach;' *i. e.* in doing the will of God; 'becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is 'the Saviour of all men, eſpecially of them 'who believe.' The devils go on in ſinning, becauſe they deſpair; but man hath hope ſet before him, that he may be encouraged to obedience, and allured to purſue holineſs from a principle of love and gratitude. If we are made new creatures, how can we chooſe but love and honour the law of God, who hath ſaved us by his goſpel, and changed our unhappy ſtate from ſin and death to hope and joy.

Beſides, it is the goſpel that gives us the ſanctifying Spirit, as I ſaid before. Gal. iii. 2, 14. and Heb. viii. 10. This is that *new covenant*, according to which *he writes his law in our hearts.*

3. *No faith in the grace of God will juſtify men, but that which worketh by love;* Gal. v. 6. and produceth the good fruits of obedience. Abraham obeyed the call of God: James ii. 22, 26. And in this ſenſe *his works wrought together with his faith, towards his juſtification.* Not that his imperfect works

in

in themselves do any thing to justify him, but his sincere imperfect works were the effect of his faith, and proved his faith to be alive, and true, and saving. Things are said to be done in scripture, when they are declared or manifested to be done: So Abraham is said to be *justified by works*, when his works declared and manifested his faith, whereby he was justified, James ii. 25, 26. David's faith in forgiveness was such as was accompanied with sincerity and piety, Psal. xxxii. 2. 'In whose spirit there is no guile.' It requires confession of sin, repentance, humiliation, and new watchfulness, verse 5, 6. Gal. v. 6. It must be such a *faith that purifieth the heart*, and works obedience from a principle of *love*, Acts xv. 9. Tit. iii. 5, 7, 8. *They who believe in Christ Jesus must be careful to maintain good works.*

4. *Without repentance and a change of heart, so as to love and to obey the law of God, we can never be fit for that happiness* which God promises, and which the creature wants: Without holiness of heart we can never be prepared for heaven, which consists in the blissful vision of God, nor indeed are we capable of it. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, 'for they shall see God,' Matt. v. 8. 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. Indeed none can be truly happy but those who are sanctified and assimilated to the holy Jesus. A child of Satan, and an

enemy of righteouſneſs, and of the law of God, can never be happy in the midſt of the children of God, who have his law written in their hearts, and are ever practiſing obedience to his law in perfection.

Holineſs indeed is a part of ſalvation, which conſiſts in a releaſe from the bondage of ſin, and the power of it in our own hearts, as well as from the guilt and puniſhment of it in our perſons. And the man who profeſſes to receive the goſpel of Chriſt, and hope in God for ſalvation, he doth not know what he profeſſes, if he does not hope for holineſs, and long for it, and deſire it. If he goes to truſt in Chriſt as a Saviour, merely from the wrath of God and hell, he doth not accept of Jeſus as ſuch a Saviour as the goſpel repreſents him; *i. e.* a Saviour from ſin, Mat. i. 21. as well as from hell and wrath.

Laſt REMARKS *drawn from the whole Text, thus opened, explained, and proved.*

1ſt Remark. *See why St. Paul always denies juſtification to be obtained by the law, i. e.* by any law whatſoever; *(viz.)* becauſe none have fulfilled, or can fulfil, any moral law of God in perfection, and a law requires perfect obedience, in order to juſtification by it: Nor is it in the nature or power of it to juſtify thoſe who are under it, and yield not perfect obedience. 'Curſed be every one 'that

'that continueth not in all things written in 'the book of the law, to do them.' The epistles to the Romans and Galatians are full of this doctrine. Whether it be the *law of nature;* Rom. ii. 14, 15. or whether the law under which the Jews were, which includes the moral, ceremonial, and political precepts of it; Rom. iii. 19, 20, 23. all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. *By the works of the law*, any law whatsoever, *no flesh shall be justified.* Man doth not, cannot, obtain life by any law; it cannot give life.

In this sense *all laws are laws of works. Do this, and live*, is their language and sense. *The man that doth them shall live in them.*

2d Remark. *See here to what a wretched and deplorable state of guilt and misery are we fallen, that no law which God can make in our circumstances can save us.* God cannot make a law which doth not require perfect holiness, in thought, word, and deed: He cannot make a law which allows sin and imperfection: For this would be, as it were, *to establish iniquity by a law*, which the holy God cannot do. The holy nature of God, as governor of his creatures, cannot but command them to be perfectly holy, under whatsoever gracious dispensations he may place them, for the relief of their guilt, weakness, and distress. His law still commands what fallen impotent creatures cannot fully obey; and therefore we are miserable.

What a hideous ruin hath the firſt man brought into human nature, and ſpread over all this lower creation? It hath weakened all our powers, hath turned our hearts away from God, hath debaſed our inclinations to ſenſe, and fleſh, and vanity, and made God's own rational creatures incapable of being made happy by any law that he ſhould give them, when taken in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe of a law.

3d Remark. *Even the goſpel of Chriſt, conſidered as a mere law, as requiring duty, and promiſing a reward upon full performance, cannot give life to ſinful man:* For whether you take it in a large ſenſe, and conſider it as including the *moral law*, taken into the hand of Chriſt the Mediator, ſtill it diminiſhes not its commandments, it requires perfect holineſs, and abates nothing in its demands. Or whether you take it in a more limited ſenſe, as requiring *faith and new obedience*, ſincere diligence and watchfulneſs, yet, conſidered as a law, it requires the practice of theſe duties in greater perfection than the beſt of ſaints or Chriſtians ever practiſed them; otherwiſe they would not ſin in coming ſhort of what the goſpel requires; and therefore they cannot give life, if God ſhould ſtrictly judge us, according to theſe gentle commands of the goſpel. And therefore you find, when the apoſtle ſpeaks of *juſtification* according to the goſpel, he is poſitive, peremptory, and univerſal,

universal, in his exclusion of all works of the law from justifying us; as in Rom. iii. and Gal. iii.

He calls the *gospel* therefore a *promise*, the *grace of God*, *the new covenant*, &c. that he may not be supposed to speak of it as justifiing us under the notion of a law. He never calls the gospel a *law*, but in such a rhetorical or figurative sense, by way of *catachresis* or a very strong metaphor, *the law of faith;* as in Rom. iii. 27. It is as if he should say, If we must call it a law, it is a mere *law of faith*, or *trusting* in the mercy of God.

Quest. 1. *What is the gospel then? and how doth it justify us, and give life?*

Answ. Not as fulfillers of a law, and thereby obtaining a claim to life, but as depending upon mere mercy. The *gospel* is a constitution of the blessed God, whereby he accepts less obedience at our hands than the law requires; and that, not to make up a righteousness for our acceptance, but that God may receive us through grace, for the sake of his son Jesus Christ, who wrought a perfect obedience, or complete righteousness, to answer that law, and died to make atonement for our sins, and *redeemed us from the curse of the law*, which we had deserved. This is the express language of the gospel, taught us by St. Paul; Rom. iii. 23, 24. 'All 'have sinned, and come short of the glory of

'God;' *i. e.* of that glory which we ſhould have obtained by a perfect obedience: But when we are juſtified, it is done 'freely by 'his grace, through the redemption that is in 'Jeſus Chriſt.' The law condemns us as ſinners, and we muſt be ſenſible of this condemnation. The goſpel ſhews us, that we muſt truſt or depend merely on forgiving grace, and not pretend to any righteouſneſs of our own, and to claim life by obeying the law ourſelves. It is by our faith or dependance, not by our works, and any claim of merit. The whole ſtrain of the apoſtle's writing to the Romans hath this view in the five or ſix firſt chapters.

Queſt. 2. *Is it not therefore matter of blame for us to us call the goſpel a law? or the new law?*

Anſ. The word *law*, when taken in a ſtrict ſenſe, for the will of a ſovereign prince revealed, and requiring perfect obedience of his ſubjects, and pronouncing a ſubject righteous only upon this obedience, is the true notion and idea of a law: In this ſenſe the goſpel is not a *law*, for it doth not pronounce any perſons righteous, and accepted to the favour of God, on account of a perfect obedience performed by them to any command which was given them.

But if a *law* be taken in a large ſenſe, for any conſtitution of a governor, whereby he graciouſly accepts at our hands leſs than his law

law requires, and pardons those offenders who are sincerely willing and desirous to obey his law, and who trust in his mercy, then the gospel may be called a *law*. *Torah*, in the Hebrew, is used in this large sense for the gospel; Isa. ii. 3. 'Out of Zion shall go forth 'the law,' &c. and other places.

And Νομος in the Greek, may be enlarged to such an extensive sense also: But originally it signifies that which distributes to every one their due reward, according to their merit, or their services; and in this sense the gospel cannot be a *law*.

St. Paul does not usually call it so; nor can I think it the best way for ministers to represent it thus.

Yet, after all, it is but a sort of difference in words, if we do but explain the things in the right manner, and guard against those errors which we are liable to fall into on either side.

Nor would I be angry with any man, who considerately and sincerely thinks this the best way of representing and explaining the gospel, any further than to say, that St. Paul did not think it the best way, and I am much of his mind.

4th Remark. *How much should our souls bless God for the introduction of the gospel into the world, at the first promise;* and even for all the promises of this new covenant, especially in this last, and best, and brightest edition,

tion, and the adminiſtration of it by Jeſus Chriſt, and his Spirit? As it is expreſſed and explained in Heb. viii. 10, 12.

Have we not ſometimes had an awakening and painful ſenſe of guilt?

Have we never thought ourſelves ſinners, and feared the eternal anger of God, and cried out for ſalvation from the condemning ſentence of the broken law?

And when we have reſolved, and watched, and laboured again to fulfil the holy law of God, and failed in many inſtances, have we not bewailed ourſelves as weak and impotent creatures, as well as under the guilt of ſo many offences, repeated and abounding? O what abundant reaſon have we to bleſs God for the goſpel of his grace, through Jeſus Chriſt, wherein our only hope lies, and all our ſalvation! Even all our hopes of pardon and acceptance with God, as well as all our ſtrength to do the will of God, and obey his law, ſo far as Chriſtians are enabled and expected to do in this life.

Let us fly from the law, and its curſes and condemnation, to the refuge and hope which the goſpel has ſet before us, and live there daily, by faith in the Son of God the Saviour; for there only lies our ſafety from the wrath of God, and eternal deſtruction.

5th Remark. *What a glorious harmony will appear in the review of all the diſpenſations of God at the laſt day, between the law and*

and the goſpel? The law was the inſtrument of God's government of his creatures, and the rule of his juſtice, from the beginning of the world to the end: But the goſpel is the inſtrument of his grace for our ſalvation.

The law is the rule, guiding and teaching all the ſaints in the ways of holineſs, convincing of ſin, and condemning all ſinners, and driving them to ſeek refuge in grace: And the goſpel is the noble and divine remedy, diſcovering that grace whereby alone we can be ſaved.

And why may not theſe ſentiments be part of our tranſporting and beatifying contemplations in the heavenly ſtate? It is generally agreed by our divines, that the various providences of the life and ſtate we have paſt through in this world, whether they have been painful or pleaſant, ſhall be the matter of our delightful review and meditation; eſpecially ſo far as they have been the happy means of our ſanctification, and our preparation for the final bleſſedneſs of the heavenly ſtate.

I am well aſſured there will be abundant matter of joy and thankfulneſs found in theſe different diſpenſations of God, *in his bringing many ſons to glory;* and there will be ample inſtances of his providential care and glorious examples of his righteouſneſs and his grace, in a thouſand particular tranſactions of the bleſſed God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt his Son, with the children of his grace: And perhaps

perhaps there ſhall be ſuch diſcoveries made to us of the righteouſneſs and the grace of God in his holy law and his goſpel, among theſe divine tranſactions, as will elevate our ſouls into higher raptures of gratitude and joy, and furniſh our tongues with pleaſant and everlaſting *hallelujahs*.

The ſaints in that day ſhall chearfully and thankfully recount the awful voice of God in the commands and terrors of his law, ſince theſe were the bleſſed means of awakening their ſtupid conſciences, and of ſtirring them to a haſty flight to Jeſus and his goſpel, as the only and all-ſufficient refuge of ſinful and guilty ſouls. Happy creatures, who turned their eyes to his grace, when they were thus ſelf-condemned, and trembling for fear of the immediate execution of the divine threatenings of his law.

How glorious and delightful will be the moments of theſe ſouls, when they ſhall review the firſt glimpſes they had by divine grace, of the ſalvation and hope which was to be found for them in the encouraging language of the goſpel and the promiſes? What new ſongs will ariſe to the Redeemer, in this review of thoſe paſt events? What echoes of praiſe to him that ſits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, while the inhabitants of the bleſſed world are purſuing and tracing out backward the ancient ſteps of the grace of God towards their recovery from the

the sin and ruin of the *first Adam*, and their entering into the covenant of salvation, thro' *Jesus Christ* the *second?* He was the ever-blessed *antitype* of the *first Adam*, the great Head and Lord of life and everlasting blessedness, to all who are sanctified and saved. Honour, and glory, and power, be to his holy name, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

DISCOURSE V.

SERMONS preached at Berry-Street, 1744, and 1745.

In which

The Early Appointment of the Atonement of CHRIST is manifeſted.

The Firſt Part of this SERMON.

Rev. xiii. 8.

The Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.

IN order to make the ſenſe of theſe words eaſy and plain, we muſt take into our counſel three other texts of the New Teſtament: *(viz.)*

I. 1 Pet. i. 18—20. 'Ye know ye were 'not redeemed with corruptible things, as 'ſilver and gold, but with the precious blood 'of

'of Chriſt, as of a Lamb, without blemiſh, 'and without ſpot, ver. 20. Who verily was 'fore-ordained before the foundation of the 'world, but was manifeſted in theſe laſt times 'for you.' This ſhews us, that this Lamb was Jeſus Chriſt, who was offered a ſacrifice for the ſins of the world, and thereby takes them away, John i. 29.

II. Acts xv. 18. 'Known unto God are 'all his works from the beginning of the 'world:' And therefore this great work of redeeming ſinners by the death of his Son Jeſus, as 1 Pet. i. 20. was alſo known to him.

III. Rom. iv. 17. 'God quickeneth the 'dead, and calleth thoſe things which are 'not, as though they were;' *i. e.* ſpeaketh ſometimes of things not yet done, as though they were done; therefore this Lamb is ſaid to be ſlain from the foundation of the world, becauſe it was by virtue of his death many other things were appointed.

God hath before the foundation of the world, ordained all things that regard the ſalvation and recovery of man, from the ruins of his fall. Sometimes the holy ſcripture ſpeaks of thoſe things which were originally deſigned and decreed, as though they were actually done, though perhaps it was many ages afterwards before theſe things had any actual being.

It

It is in this ſenſe that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is ſaid to be the 'Lamb ſlain before the foun-'dation of the world;' *i. e.* he was decreed and determined to be the Saviour of mankind; and for this end he was appointed to be a ſacrifice of atonement for our ſins, even before God laid the foundations of the world, Eph. i. 4, 5. He appeared as the Lamb ſlain for this purpoſe, and with this deſign, in the eye of God, who ſees all things in one ſingle view, whether they be things paſt, preſent, or to come. God the Father kept Jeſus Chriſt his Son ever in his eye in this view, through all his tranſactions with the children of men.

It is generally ſuppoſed that Adam ſtood in the ſtate of innocence but a few days at moſt, or a very ſhort time after his creation, though our Lord Jeſus Chriſt came not into this world, nor took fleſh and blood upon him of the ſubſtance of the virgin Mary, till about four thouſand years afterwards. Many ages ran out amongſt the inhabitants of this world in that time, and even ſome of the tranſactions of God in his own eternity, before the foundation of the world, are reaſonably ſuppoſed to be derived from this *very* idea, in the mind and appointment of the bleſſed God, becauſe he had originally appointed that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould in due time take fleſh and blood, and be offered as a ſacrifice for the ſins of men.

Here

Here we ſhall firſt enquire what are thoſe early tranſactions of the bleſſed God in eternity, or in time, which may be ſuppoſed to have been any ways influenced by this view of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and the anſwers are theſe:

1. It was in this view that *God at firſt decreed and deſigned to ſave and recover any part of fallen man from their ruin, ſin, and miſery, and choſe thouſands of the race of ſinful mankind to be reſtored to his favour, and to his image:* Eph. i. 4, 5, 7. 'Behold my ſervant, 'whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my 'ſoul delighteth:' That ſo God might have a proper atonement made for all their ſins, by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in order to be reconciled to them, and to reconcile them to himſelf, that *they might be holy, and without blame.*

It would be too long at preſent to enter into this enquiry, why God required an atonement for ſin, or why his juſtice and his grace would not unite in the ſalvation of fallen man without it: The great God thought it unbecoming his ſupreme majeſty, and his character, to deal thus in a way of abſolute mercy with men; and as he has determined it ſo in his word, this is enough for us to acquieſce therein: As Heb. ii. 10. 'It became him for 'whom are all things, and by whom are all 'things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, 'to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect 'through ſufferings.' τελειωσαι, *i. e.* As critics in

the Greek language expound it, to consecrate, sanctify, or finish this captain of salvation for this service, by an atoning sacrifice.

God was pleased to make his *beloved* Son Jesus Christ his first elect; Isa. xlii. 1. and he chose all the rest in him. Eph. i. 4. 'According as he hath chosen us in him before 'the foundation of the world, that we should 'be holy and without blame before him in 'love.' He was resolved to set him up at the head of all the saved number, who was his own Son, that he should be their forerunner into heaven, and have the honour of redeeming all the sons of God, and bringing them back unto the Father: And he decreed him to be the great sacrifice for the expiation of the sins of all his chosen and favourite sons: *He has redeemed them all with his blood.*

2. It was in the view of Jesus Christ, as the great Mediator and sacrifice, *that God appointed any further communion, or any favourable communications, between himself and his fallen creature man.* It was in this view that he appointed there should be any approach of fallen man towards himself: It was in this view he gave him the first promise, and the first hope of mercy, even that the 'seed of the woman should bruise the head 'of the serpent;' Gen. ii. 15. by whom mankind was deceived to their ruin and destruction; and by appointing Jesus Christ to be a sacrifice for sin: It was propheſied that his heel,

heel, or the lower part of his nature, *i. e.* his body, ſhould be bruiſed, in order to break the head of the ſerpent; as it is explained 1 John iii. 8. 'For this purpoſe the Son of 'God was manifeſted that he might deſtroy 'the works of the devil;' *i. e.* his tyranny and dominion over man. This *ſeed of the woman* was the appointed ſacrifice for this purpoſe, Gen. iii. 15. It was with this view that God enquired after loſt man in the garden of Paradiſe, in order to recover and ſave him by his Son Jeſus, Gen. iii. 9. 'Adam, Where art 'thou?' And he gave him the promiſe of recovery by this means. And as God afterwards appointed it, that *no man ſhould come to the Father, but by the Son;* John xiv. 6. ſo he revealed himſelf as making his way towards fallen Adam, by this man Jeſus; and it is by him that all that are brought back again to God have been appointed to draw near to him ever ſince; for he is the only appointed way.

It is alſo very probable that God might make clearer diſcoveries to our firſt parents in the midſt of their ruined and diſmal ſtate, in and with this firſt promiſe, than Moſes, the divine hiſtorian, has given us an account of, becauſe this was to be the beginning and firſt pledge of their hope of any acceptance with God, and their expectation of life and ſalvation.

Let me here ſpeak one awakening word to fallen ſinners: Did you never give yourſelves

leave to think how great your guilt and deſtruction is, and how terrible your miſery and danger? And do you never conſider that it was in and by Jeſus Chriſt, as the appointed ſacrifice for our ſins, that God made his firſt ſteps towards you in a way of reſtoration and recovery? This ſhould not be utterly neglected and forgotten by ſinners. See how early was the love of God to fallen man.

3. It was in this view of Jeſus Chriſt, as a propitiatory ſacrifice, *that God inſtituted ſacrifices to be offered up by Adam, immediately after his fall*, as it is recorded by Moſes. God forbid that ever we ſhould imagine, that the great God left this important affair of offering ſacrifices to reconcile and appeaſe an angry God, to the mere invention of vain and fooliſh man? And how can we ſuppoſe that it ſhould enter into the heart of man, that God ſhould be pleaſed with ſuch ſacrifices as the cutting and burning of his living creatures in the fire, in order to pleaſe him after their firſt ſin?

It is very evident that God appointed the ſkins of beaſts to be their firſt covering, but theſe very beaſts were not then appointed by God the creator to be ſlain for the food of man, till the days of Noah: and therefore, it muſt be out of the beaſts ſlain for ſacrifice, *that the Lord God made coats of ſkins*, and clothed Adam, and his wife Eve. And it is highly probable that their clothing was made out

out of the ſkins of the beaſts that were ſacrificed, to guard them from the cold winds, and ſtorms, and from any of the inconveniencies of the air and ſky that might befal them, for want of ſuch covering. Gen. iii. 21. 'And unto Adam and his wife did the 'Lord God make coats of ſkins, and clothed 'them.'

It is further evident, that theſe ſacrifices were not merely ſacrifices of thankſgiving and acknowledgment to God for his mercies, as men are too often ready to ſuppoſe. When Cain brought to God the firſt fruits of the ground, Gen. iv. 3. if it was done merely as an offering of thankfulneſs, it is manifeſt that Abel alſo, Gen. v. 4. 'brought of the firſt-'lings of his flock, and the fat thereof;' and it is very plain that Abel found acceptance with God, but Cain did not, ver. 5. And as it is repeated, Heb. xi. 4. 'By faith Abel of-'fered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice 'than Cain.' And probably this was the difference, becauſe by the ſacrifice and death of the living creatures, there was an acknowledgment made of ſin, and of ſinful man's deſert of death, by ſome intimation from heaven; and this was accepted of God as an atonement or ſubſtitute, in the room of the ſinner, or a typical propitiation for ſin. This ſeems to be implied in that queſtion of Balak to Balaam, Micah vi. 6. 'Wherewith ſhall I come before 'the Lord, and bow myſelf before the moſt

'high God? Shall I come before him with 'burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? 'Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of 'rams? &c. Or ſhall I give my firſt-born for 'my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for 'the ſin of my ſoul?' It is very natural for man, under a ſenſe of the guilt of ſin, to enquire how he ſhall appear before a holy God with acceptance? And God, as it were in anſwer to ſuch a ſuppoſed enquiry, directs Adam to the ſacrifice of beaſts, as an atonement for ſin; *i. e.* as a ſort of ranſom for the forfeited life of man. And this is the moſt natural and moſt eaſy ſenſe of things, and the beſt account of the original of ſacrifices, and of the prevalence and continuance of that cuſtom almoſt all over the world: And this is the faireſt account of the original tradition of Adam's firſt ſacrifice after his fall from God, and the ſenſe of his anger.*

4. It

* As it is generally ſuppoſed by our divines, that it was Jeſus the Son of God, who, in the name of his Father, appeared to Adam in the garden after his ſin, and had this converſation with him, ſo it is not unlikely that God, in the perſon of his Son Jeſus, taught Adam how to manage theſe ſacrifices, by taking off the ſkins, and cutting the beaſts into proper parts, and burning them; of which there is a hint given in the Greek tranſlation of the Septuagint, Gen. iv. 7. which is not found in the Hebrew original at preſent, where God ſays to Cain, *If thou haſt rightly offered, but haſt not rightly divided the ſacrifice, thou haſt ſinned.* And if this is ſuppoſed to be a true account of the matter, then Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, in a preludium to his incarnation, was the firſt High

4. It was in the view of the atoning ſacrifice of Chriſt, the Lamb of God, that *all the ſchemes of the Jewiſh ſacrifices, all the ſlaughter and burnt-offerings of the animals, and the pourings-out and ſprinklings of blood, and the waſhings with water in the Jewiſh ſacrifices, were firſt appointed as figurative methods, to cleanſe them from ſinful defilements:* And the Lord Jeſus Chriſt at laſt appeared, or was ſet forth hereby, as the great deliverer from the wrath of God, and as typified under all theſe figures and ſhadows, Heb. x. 1—12. 'The 'law having a ſhadow of good things to come, 'but not the very image of the things,' thoſe ſacrifices were all imperfect as to the grand deſign; for they could not cleanſe the conſciences of men from guilt before God, Heb. x. 1, 2. In this reſpect Chriſt alone was the true ſacrifice, Heb. ix. 11, 12.

And this was the reaſon of ſhedding of the blood of beaſts according to the law, Heb. ix. 14, 15, 22. *For there was no remiſſion without blood.* The blood of Chriſt, by virtue of his union with the true God, had infinite and immortal value in it. Chriſt, the Lamb of God, *offered himſelf without ſpot unto*

High Prieſt, and he that taught Adam firſt to offer a ſacrifice, and ſo, in the ſight of God, it was accepted from the hands of him whom God had conſtituted an everlaſting High Prieſt; though, at the ſame time, the ſacrifice of Chriſt, the Lamb of God, might be typified by the ſlaughter and ſacrifice of the beaſt itſelf.

God, to purge our conſciences from dead works, or from works that deſerve death, *that we might ſerve the living and true God with acceptance:* Thus Iſrael, conſidered as a national church, derived this advantage from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

And it was with this view that the national atonement, or the bullock that was offered every year for the ſins of the whole nation, Lev. xvith and xviith chapters, attained its proper effect, and delivered the whole nation from national guilt, and that deſtruction which the juſtice of God might have brought upon it for ſin.

5. It was in the view of this great ſacrifice, ſlain from the foundation of the world, *that God pardoned* the perſonal guilt of men, and forgave *thouſands of ſins under the Old Teſtament*, and ſpared the guilty, each of them in their day and ſeaſon, and took away the guilt of their iniquities. So David was forgiven his adultery and his murder, crimes of the deepeſt dye, for which David knew of no ſacrifice, Pſal. li. 16. and for which no man could be pardoned or juſtified by any ceremonies in the law of Moſes: And therefore the apoſtle ſays, *By this man*, even *Jeſus Chriſt*, there was *forgiveneſs* appointed for thoſe ſins for which no ſacrifices were ordered by the law of Moſes, nor any ſacrifices were offered, or accepted, according to the levitical law. Acts xiii. 38, 39. Rom. iii. 24,

24, 25. 'God has ſet him forth as a propi-'tiation through faith in his blood, to declare 'his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins 'that are paſt, through the forbearance of 'God*:' But even at that time there was forgiveneſs with God in the view of Chriſt; for even David ſpeaks with much freedom in the 32d Pſalm, and elſewhere of the pardon of ſin.

It was alſo through this blood of the Lamb ſlain, that Solomon was pardoned his many heinous and grievous ſins; *i. e.* the Lamb of God ſlain in the view of the Father, as an atoning ſacrifice from the foundation of the world: And through the ſame blood God forgave the repeated crimes of Manaſſeh the king, who had filled Jeruſalem with ſlaughter; and all the ſaints, and all the kings, who had ever been ſinners, and were ſaved, it was in this view of the blood of the Lamb; always ſuppoſing truſt in the mercy of God, together with ſincere repentance, and return to God, was found with the ſinner at the ſame time. Bleſſed Jeſus, how early and how extenſive was this ſalvation through thy blood, even before it was actually offered!

6 *The*

* We tranſlate this word *forgiveneſs*, as though it were Ἄφεσις, *remiſſion*, but the word is πάρεσις, which properly ſignifies the *paſſing by of ſin;* that is, that God did not then actually puniſh them: Though the Cocceian writers do not make a juſt inference from this, that therefore no ſins were pardoned under the Old Teſtament, but merely the puniſhment of them delayed or neglected.

6. *The gospel of the salvation of sinful man was contrived and appointed by the great God, in this view of Jesus the Lamb of God, the great expiatory sacrifice, slain from the foundation of the world:* And it is for this reason that the doctrine of this atonement for sin by sacrifice, runs through all the parts and forms of religion, which God early appointed in the world, and the several religions which man, under the divine appointment of God, ever practised, Heb. x. 11, 12. Where there is a particular account given of the covenant of grace, from the language of the prophets. 'This man, after he had offered one sacrifice 'for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand 'of God; for by one offering, he hath for 'ever perfected them that are sanctified; 'whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness 'to us: For when he had said, This is the 'covenant I will make with them after those 'days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws 'in their hearts, and in their minds will I 'write them; and their sins and iniquities 'will I remember no more. Now where re-'mission of these is, there is no more offering 'for sin.' These are the blessings of the gospel of Christ; here is the sanctifying Spirit included, as well as the blood of atonement; here is a purification of our natures, as well as justification of our persons, introduced in the view of this Lamb that was slain: And therefore John the Baptist might say, in more

more ſenſes than one, John i. 29. 'Behold 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſins 'of the world.' He takes away the guilt of ſin by his atoning ſacrifice, and the power of ſin in the ſoul, by the ſanctification of his Spirit. All the bleſſed promiſes of the goſpel, in the Old Teſtament and in the New, are but the language of this new covenant, which aroſe from the view and foreſight of the blood of this dying Lamb; which was therefore called *the blood of the everlaſting covenant*, Heb. xiii. 10.

Let me aſk ye now, O ſinners, whoſe conſciences are expoſed to agonies through the guilt of ſin, and whoſe ſouls are in danger of being captivated into new offences, by the power of ſin within you: Do you not ſee how neceſſary theſe bleſſings are to your ſalvation? How can you have your ſins pardoned, or your ſouls accepted with God unto eternal life, or renewed unto holineſs, if you have not an intereſt in the ſalvation, wrought by this blood of the Lamb?

7. It was with this deſign, and in the view of this blood of Jeſus, the great ſacrifice, that *all the ordinances of the New Teſtament itſelf were inſtituted: Baptiſm* itſelf had ſomething of this ſignification; for ſo ſaid Ananias the Chriſtian to Paul, when he was firſt ſtruck down to the ground by the viſion from heaven, 'Why tarrieſt thou? Ariſe, and be 'baptized, and waſh away thy ſins, calling

'on

'on the name of the Lord Jesus,' Acts xxii. 16. The water of *baptism* came to have a cleansing and sanctifying virtue from the foresight and eternal mercy of God, who appointed Jesus Christ to be slain for a sacrifice; which is also intimated Heb. x. 21. 'Let us 'draw near with a true heart, in full assurance 'of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an 'evil conscience, and our bodies washed,' *i. e.* in baptism, 'with pure water.'

There is no need of the particular description of the institution of the *Lord's supper*, Matt. xxvi. 28. Rev. i. 5. wherein the blood of Jesus Christ is said to wash us from our sins. *The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all unrighteousness*, 1 John i. 7.

8. It was in the view of this Lamb slain from the foundation of the world *that there was a way made, provided, and prepared, for our Lord Jesus Christ to arise from the dead.* The apostle to the Hebrews, in chap. xiii. ver. 10. is express in this sentiment. 'The 'God of peace, who brought again from the 'dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of 'the sheep, through the blood of the everlast-'ing covenant:' *i. e.* The covenant of grace and pardon, which began as soon as man had sinned, and remains to this day, even to all everlasting, to speak peace and pardon to sinners. Every circumstance in this part of the history of our Saviour was appointed in this view. He died, and lay in the grave for a short

ſhort ſeaſon, to prove the truth and reality of his death, and he aroſe again, to confirm the predictions of the ancient prophets, for all the works of God, concerning our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and his tranſactions in life and in death, *were known to him from the beginning of the world;* and every ſtep of his ſufferings, and his riſing from the grave, was all ordained with a view to this blood of the covenant, by which he was raiſed from the dead, Acts xi. 18. All the decrees of God, and all the predictions of the prophets, all the types of the old Jewiſh law, and all the promiſes of God with regard to his Son Jeſus, were doubtleſs appointed, accompliſhed, and fulfilled, with a regard to this great ſacrifice.

The holy angels, who were to be employed in the reſurrection and aſcenſion of Chriſt, were doubtleſs acquainted with this glorious event before-hand; every one of thoſe holy ones had their orders to be ready at the proper poſt for theſe tranſactions; for his riſing from the dead, and his glorious entrance, as the Son of God, into his heavenly kingdom; *thouſands of angels* were preſent there. Pſal. lxviii. 17. 'The chariots of God are twenty 'thouſand, even thouſands of angels. The 'Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the 'holy place. Thou haſt aſcended on high, 'thou haſt led captivity captive,' &c. in ver. 17, 18.

9. Therefore

9. Therefore was our Lord Jesus Christ represented to the apostle John, as a *Lamb slain in the midst of the throne*, after his resurrection, and his entrance into glory in heaven, Rev. v. 6. *That there might be an everlasting emblem, and monument, or memorial, of the Lamb slain before the face of God, for all the blessed designs which God had in his view for the salvation of his people, through all the ages of mankind, ever since sin entered into the world, even to the end of time, and the consummation of all things:* That by this vision there might be before the eyes of God a perpetual appearance of this foundation of our pardon of sin, the justification of our persons through the blood of Christ, and our acceptance with God in the heavenly world. And who can tell, or who can conceive, how many and how various were the blessed and glorious ends that God designed, and actually attained, by this representation?

DISCOURSE VI.

ON

REVELATIONS xiii. 8.

The Second Part of this SERMON.

Rev. xiii. 8. and v. 6.

——*Of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world. In the midſt of the throne—ſtood a Lamb as it had been ſlain.*

THUS far have we conſidered what are the tranſactions of God, in which he might have a regard to the ſacrifice of Chriſt, repreſented ſo early as before the foundation of the world.

In the *next* place, I proceed to conſider *what divine leſſons of inſtruction, or conſolation, may be derived from this viſion of the Lamb, as it had been ſlain, appearing in the midſt of the throne*, Rev. v. 6. And among theſe we may number ſuch as follow.

1ſt *Leſſon.*

1ſt *Leſſon.* There is hereby an information given to the inhabitants of the heavenly world, that *Jeſus, the Son of God, who was made man, has redeemed many from among the children of men, to be a praiſe unto him, and his glory, in all ages to come. There is an enquiry,* Rev. vii. 13. 'What are theſe which are 'arrayed in white robes, and whence came 'they?' To this we may anſwer, as in that text, ver. 14. 'Theſe are they who came 'out of great tribulation.' Or we may give the ſame anſwer as Zeba and Zalmunna anſwered to Gideon, when they were aſked, 'What manner of men were they whom ye 'ſlew at Tabor?' And they anſwered, 'As 'thou art, ſo were they; each one reſembled 'the children of a king.' And he ſaid, 'They were my brethren, even the ſons of 'my mother.' Each of them are the brethren of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, born of women, and expoſed to great tribulations; but they have all 'waſhed their robes, and made 'them white in the blood of the Lamb:' And therefore they are like the angels of heaven, who ſtand round the throne, in the glorious ſervices for which they are prepared, in the court of our bleſſed Redeemer, each of them the image of the firſt born Son of God, and reconciled to God the Father by his blood, and ſhall dwell there for ever with him. A glorious reconciler, and a divine atonement,

atonement, and happy ſouls who are partakers of it?

2d *Leſſon.* The Lamb, as it had been ſlain, appears there as a divine Mediator, and is *a memorial of the everlaſting virtue, and conſtant efficacy, of the atoning ſacrifice of Chriſt;* which was typified of old by the conſtant ſacrifices morning and evening: The *prieſts* on earth 'ſtood daily miniſtring, and offering often-'times the ſame ſacrifices; which could ne-'ver *effectually* take away ſin: But this man, 'after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, 'for ever ſat down on the right hand of God: 'For by one offering he has for ever perfected 'them that are ſanctified,' Heb. x. 11, 12, 14. Theſe repeated ſacrifices, were deſigned as a type to remove the continual guilt of returning ſins amongſt the ſaints; morning-ſins, and evening-ſins, ſins in the beginning of life, ſins in the middle ſtate of life, and ſins of old age; ſins of public life, and private ſins, known and unknown, ſecret and public. The prieſts were daily employed in continuing theſe typical ſacrifices, through all the Levitical diſpenſation. And let it be obſerved, Acts iii. 1. this was called the *hour of prayer;* and that the people were appointed to offer their prayers and praiſes unto God at theſe times of the morning and evening ſacrifice, as the everlaſting means of the acceptance of our morning and evening worſhip before God, making all our ſervices

acceptable to the great and bleſſed God in heaven hereby.

Therefore when we come to lift up our morning worſhip, or our evening addreſſes, to the throne, let us remember that Jeſus, the Lamb who was ſlain, is there for ever, making this *new and living way to the throne* plain, and keeping it always open by the virtue of his ſacrifice. Let not a morning or evening paſs without an addreſs to heaven in this blood.

3d *Leſſon. This gives ſufficient and perpetual notice of the everlaſting interceſſion which Chriſt makes for the ſaints*, Heb. vii. 25. And therefore he is repreſented *as able to ſave to the uttermoſt all thoſe that come unto God by him.* There is no need of other high prieſts to offer up daily ſacrifices, ſince the one ſacrifice of Jeſus, the great High Prieſt, in the conſtant emblem of it, abides here before the face of God for ever. John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, who, by his blood, cleanſeth us from all ſin. Though our ſins may be as ſcarlet*, Iſa. i. 18. *they ſhall all be waſhed away;* and our garments *be as white as ſnow*, or *made white as wool*, and fit to appear before God continually, without blemiſhes and defilement, through this abounding fountain, which may be ſaid to flow for ever from the wounds of Jeſus Chriſt, as a ſacrifice; ſince it is in and by this blood, our High Prieſt may be ſuppoſed for ever to plead with the Father

Father for our pardon and acceptance: For the interceſſion of Chriſt is ſcarcely revealed unto us as carried on by the actual voice or language of Jeſus the Son of God in heaven; but perhaps it rather means the everlaſting virtue and efficacy of his ſacrifice, as his blood, which has a voice in it, even as a *fountain*, *always* open and flowing in the ſight of God, for the *forgiveneſs of ſins*, Zech. xiii. 1. for all the true Iſrael of God: And in this ſenſe, the blood of Jeſus, as is elſewhere ſaid concerning the blood of Abel, it has *a voice* in it, *and pleads for ever for better things than the blood of Abel did*, Heb. xii. 24. Glory be to God for providing this everlaſting ſacrifice, and for revealing ſuch a viſion in the midſt of the throne, for our conſtant contemplation.

4th *Leſſon.* This viſion appears on the throne as *an everlaſting encouragement for the vileſt and moſt guilty ſinners of all ages to truſt in the ſacrifice of the Lamb that was ſlain.* When we remember the ſcarlet and crimſon ſins of David, Solomon, and Manaſſeh, and of the Corinthians, which are reckoned up, 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11. the ſaints on earth may ſay, *And ſuch were we*, drenched all over and defiled with iniquities, whoſe evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions, are without bounds, and without number; *but they are all waſhed* away in this divine laver, with all the infinite evil and guilt of them, againſt

the majesty and the grace of God; for the virtue and the dignity of the united Godhead, which dwells in the man Christ Jesus, runs through the whole of his sacrifice, and makes it of infinite and everlasting value; whereby sins of all manner of aggravations are removed from those that believe in Jesus, 1 John i. 7. Matt. xii. 31. No manner of crimes are sufficient to create despair, where this atonement is provided.

5th *Lesson.* It may also be designed as an *encouraging memorial to relieve old sinners under the guilt of sins, of long continuance, and laden with many aggravations;* for as the yearly sacrifice of atonement, whose blood the high-priest carried into the holy place, and appeared there before God, cancelled the guilt of all the nation for all the days of that year; so Christ, being entered into the holy place, made without hands, and dwelling there for ever, with his own blood, answers for the sins of those that believe in him, which they have been all their lives committing against God, if they are but deeply convinced of their long and repeated iniquities, and with humble faith fly to Jesus, the hope that is set before them.

Look up, therefore, look up, ye humble penitents, that have been guilty of many and repeated crimes, and are almost drowned in tears of repentance, and are ready to die under despair, because of your aggravated iniquities,

iniquities, look unto this bleſſed emblem on high, the Lamb, as it had been ſlain: This ſacrifice gives foundation for hope, not only that we ſhall be cleanſed from all our ſecret faults, which are more than we can think, or reckon up, but even from preſumptuous ſins, which are of the deepeſt dye. Matt. xii. 31. 'All manner of ſins and blaſphemies,' ſays our Saviour, 'ſhall be forgiven unto men.' Look up to this bleſſed emblem, and you ſhall find this ſalvation complete and perfect, and your conſciences pacified, under the agonies of your own guilty reflections, through the blood of Jeſus, who died.

6th *Leſſon.* This emblem of a dying ſacrifice is alſo *a refuge, a ſupport, and a hope for ſaints, under the continual workings of original ſin, under their daily infirmities, under every new temptation, and the buffetings and charges of Satan, who is the accuſer of the brethren,* Rev. xii. 11. The armies of the ſaints have continually experienced the virtue of this ſacrifice; for in all ages *they caſt down this accuſer by the blood of the Lamb;* and here is their great refuge, under all the violent and repeated ſuggeſtions and accuſations of the great enemy of God and ſouls: Here is indeed a ſweet pillow for the ſouls of thoſe who have been guilty of long iniquities, to reſt their penitent and pained conſciences, by faith upon, in a dying hour. Heb. xiii. 8. *Jeſus is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for*

ever. And the virtue of his atonement always freſh in the eye of God.

Is there any poor ſoul here, whoſe conſcience is buffeted and ſorely tormented with hurrying temptations, and doubts whether their repeated ſins ſhall be pardoned or no? Go into the ſecret chambers of retirement and repentance, whither the ſaints before you have gone, and ſighed, and wept bitterly before God, and mourned over their ſins before the throne. Aſk Chriſtians of long experience, whence came all their peace, and their hopes of freedom from the guilt of ſin? And they will anſwer with one voice, It is from the blood of the Lamb. It would overwhelm the conſcience to have a full ſight of theſe tranſgreſſions let in upon it, in all their terror and their dreadful condemnation, if they had not ſuch a refuge as this to fly to. O bleſſed for ever be the name of Jeſus, who has given us, in his word, ſuch a ſight, ſuch a gracious viſion of hope and comfort! And a bleſſed viſion it is, for the poor humble ſinner to take a look at daily, with an eye of faith.

7th *Leſſon*. This viſion is appointed as *an evidence and monument of the church's ſafety and ſecurity, hope and confidence, even to the end of the world; though their circumſtances be never ſo low*, though they are never ſo much ſinking under their fears, this is a good ſecurity of that promiſe, Matth. xvi. 18. *The gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt the church's*

church's intereſt, to bring it down to the ground; for the ſacrifice of Chriſt is of everlaſting value, and has purchaſed the ſecurity of the church to the end of the world. Jeſus is repreſented as ſtanding in the midſt of the throne, and before the eyes of God the Father; ſo that the church ſhall never be condemned, nor given up to deſtruction. All the living ſtones that God has deſigned to be brought into the building of the church, ſhall be brought into it in their ſeveral ſeaſons: All the dead ſinners, that are made alive by the blood of Chriſt, and by the work of his Holy Spirit, ſhall be raiſed together in a glorious building, which God ſhall dwell in for ever: *And when the top-ſtone is laid* in heaven, the redeemed nations *ſhall ſhout unto it, Grace, grace,* Zech. iv. 7.

8th *Leſſon.* This viſion may be eſteemed alſo as a *monumental emblem, that the followers of Chriſt, who ſhall fill heaven with inhabitants, are ſinners redeemed from the earth:* They are brought into heaven as ranſomed by the blood of the Lamb, and as cleanſed in this laver; they are not originally pure and holy in themſelves, as the angels were, but they are guilty creatures, once ſhamefully defiled and corrupted, but reſcued from hell and ſin, and recovered from all their defilements and dangers by a bleſſed Redeemer. Such were ſome of you, all ye pardoned and ſanctified ſouls; ſuch were all of you, as related to the firſt

Adam, ſinful and miſerable; but ye are redeemed and ſaved by the ſecond. This thought ſhould ever keep us humble and ſelf-abaſed, that ſuch worthleſs creatures as we are, are not baniſhed for ever from the preſence of God. This ſhould ever put us in mind of our low eſtate, that we were once fallen creatures, and are raiſed by the ſovereign and condeſcending grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus; and it is in Chriſt alone that we ſtand.

This ſhould be a perpetual warning to each of us, not to indulge or endure the leaſt defilement of ſin; for ſin is of ſo malignant a nature, that it will ſoon ſpread all over the ſoul, and taint it with guilt and ſhame, when once indulged. This is a leſſon for redeemed creatures ever to remember, eſpecially while we are within the reach of temptation, and ſhould keep us ever watchful.

9th *Leſſon.* This viſion may give the believers in *Chriſt an everlaſting aſſurance that they ſhall never be ſeparated from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord:* For he ſtands in the midſt of the throne, and will keep his place there for ever and ever, Rom. viii. 34, 35. He ſtands there, if I may ſo ſpeak, in his prieſtly garments, with the remembrance of his bloody ſacrifice, before the throne of God, and is never out of his ſight. Faith may triumph with holy confidence in this view. *Who ſhall condemn us now,*

now, ſince Chriſt has died, and lives for ever, to maintain and teſtify this atonement, which he has made for our ſins by his death, and his riſing again? He that was dead is alive, and lives for evermore. *Amen*, Rev. i. 18. Who ſhall pretend therefore to *ſeparate us from the love of God*, that is ſo ſecured to us in and by *Jeſus Chriſt?* You ſee plainly, in the laſt verſe of this chapter, faith defies all creatures whatſoever to make any diviſion between God and the juſtified and holy ſoul, while Jeſus appears there in the eternal remembrancce of his atoning ſacrifice: The poor creature here on earth may ſometimes be overtaken with ſin, through the power of corruption, and bluſh, and fear to think of appearing before a God of perfect holineſs; but this viſion of our Redeemer encourages his faith, reſtores his ſpirit, and ſupports his hope. And we may obſerve it is placed in the laſt of the prophetic viſions, even in the Revelations of St. John, that it may abide upon the ſoul, and live in the memory of ſaints, in this frail and imperfect ſtate, where they are ſo often in danger of ſinning againſt God.

INFERENCES *or* REMARKS *drawn from theſe Diſcourſes.*

I. Rem. *How large, how excellent, and how glorious is this ſalvation of Jeſus Chriſt, the*

the Lamb of God, ſlain to take away the ſins of the world? And this may be made to appear in many particulars.

1ſt *Inſtance of the extent of it. It is a ſalvation that reaches through all ages*, from the beginning to the end of time, from the firſt ſin of man, even to the end of all things: Thoſe glories of the ſalvation of Jeſus Chriſt are beyond the reach of our preſent conception, and beyond all the powers of number to reckon up, and the force of eloquence to diſplay.

2d *Inſtance of the extent of it. It reaches through all the tribes of mankind*, through all countries and nations, through all families and perſons, both Jew and Gentile, to the ends of the earth. Our Saviour propheſies, *That if he be lifted up from the earth*, that is, crucified, and die as an atoning ſacrifice, *he ſhall draw all men unto him*, John xii. 32. So in Rev. v. 10. and vii. 9. Men of *all nations, and of all languages, of all countries and all ages*, ſhall be found in this bleſſed number, who are redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, and join in the everlaſting ſong of praiſe *to him that ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.*

3d *Inſtance of the extent of it.* This doctrine of the Lamb of God ſlain from the foundation of the world, *reaches through all the tranſactions of God with the children of men:* It begins as high as creation itſelf, thouſands

thouſands of mankind were at firſt created for this reaſon, that they might in time be joined to this bleſſed army, and rejoice and triumph in the Lamb that was ſlain: It reaches through all the redemption of Chriſt, for ſinful men were redeemed by the blood of Chriſt for this very purpoſe: For this purpoſe they were called and converted from the wicked of the earth; and turned from ſin to God, that they might for ever be made glorious in holineſs. It is through this death of Chriſt, the Son of God, that they are all juſtified and brought into the divine favour: They are all ſanctified by his Holy Spirit, under this influence, and adopted into the family of God, to become the younger brethren of Jeſus, the Firſt-begotten of the Father: And when God fulfils this ſalvation in heaven, it will appear what multitudes of fallen ruined creatures are recovered and ſaved, by this atonement of the Lamb.

4th *Inſtance of the extent of it.* I may add further, *All the mercies and bleſſings that are beſtowed upon men through time and eternity:* I might add, *Whether theſe bleſſings are national or perſonal*, yet our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in our nature, dying on the croſs, has ſome hand, by the exuberant merit of his ſacrifice, in procuring and accompliſhing all theſe purpoſes: The grace of Chriſt, while we keep our eye on the united Godhead, has ſome hand in all the temporal favours, and even the

the national mercies, even of thoſe who refuſe to receive the ſpecial and everlaſting bleſſings of his grace; beſides all the conſolations and the joys which the ſaints are partakers of here on earth, from their firſt calling to their glorification, muſt have ſome regard to this great ſacrifice, ever freſh in the eye of God.

5th *Inſtance of the extent of it.* This ſalvation ſpreads through and beyond all *the ſins that ever we committed, from the beginning of life to this day;* and beyond even *all the miſeries that mankind ever ſuſtained by their original fall, and apoſtacy from God; had they all received this grace, it is enough to balance them all.* In the dignity of the divine nature, united to the man Jeſus, there is proviſion enough to anſwer for all this abounding iniquity, and price ſufficient to buy all the bleſſings that God ever beſtowed upon his fallen creature man, and ſufficient pardon and happineſs for all the ſinners that are willing to ſubmit to the grace of God, and receive theſe bleſſings in his own appointed way. It is only impenitence, and rejection of the goſpel, hinders the univerſal effect of it. O amazing and bleſſed extent of this ſalvation!

6th *Inſtance of the extent of it.* I add, in the laſt place, the doctrine of the ſalvation of the Lamb of God, ſlain from the beginning of the world, *carries a glory through all the perfections*

perfections and attributes of God himſelf, which might be diſcovered at large in a ſurvey of the ſeveral glories of his nature, his juſtice, and wiſdom, his power and his truth, his grace and goodneſs, in the ſalvation of fallen men: There is never a perfection of God that is honoured, but it is in and by this bleſſed medium, the death and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, the Lamb of God.

II. Rem. *How neceſſary, how ſolid, and important, is this doctrine of the ſalvation of Chriſt, by the atonement of the Lamb?* It is not a mere matter of ſpeculation, amuſement, and diſcourſe, but it is of infinite concernment to men to be acquainted with it, John xii. 27. For the purpoſes and deſigns of *this hour*, even of the atonement and death of Chriſt, *the Lord Jeſus, the Lamb of God, came into this world:* This might be illuſtrated alſo in many particulars; as

1. *Illuſtration of this Remark. God would not deal thus with his beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt, to make him a bloody ſacrifice, for mean and ignoble purpoſes:* This work of his death and atonement is by no means to be eſteemed as a cypher among the works of divine grace, or as a mere object of ſpeculation and amuſement: The bleſſed God has too much love for his Son Jeſus, his only begotten, and his firſt-beloved, to make him merely the talk of his church, or the matter of entertainment for

for their meditation, or their diſcourſe; there muſt be ſomething ſubſtantial, holy, divine, and honourable, deſigned in and by the death of this Lamb of God; whoſe ſacrifice, in the view of it, is repreſented as beginning before the foundation of the world.

2d *Illuſtration of this Remark. God would not deal thus with the fallen and miſerable race of mankind, to appoint ſuch a ſacrifice, which had little or no efficacy in it.* Our Saviour himſelf tells us, John vi. 33, 35. That *he is the bread of life; and except we eat his fleſh, and drink his blood*, except the fallen and periſhing race of mankind apply themſelves to this way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, *they have no life in them;* that is, there is no ſalvation appointed any other way, Acts v. 12.

3d *Illuſtration of this Remark. The bleſſed God would not deal thus with his chief favourites among mankind*, even the wiſeſt, the beſt, and the holieſt of his creatures, to appoint his Son to be a ſacrifice *merely to entertain their reaſonings and their meditations; but it is deſigned as the food of their ſouls*, as the life of their ſpirits, and their hope for eternity, John vi. 21.

4th *Illuſtration of this Remark. Again, God would never have dealt thus with his choſen and favourite people the Jews, through all their generations, to have fed them and pleaſed them only with types and figures, ſhadows and emblems, if they had no ſubſtantial bleſſings*

bleſſings contained in them: There were indeed ſome happy uſes appointed concerning theſe types and ſhadows, in the national church of the Jews, but this was not the chief deſign of their inſtitution, but it was to figure out and repreſent the ſolid bleſſings of the goſpel, the ſpiritual and everlaſting privileges which God deſigned for all his choſen and ſaved ones.

5th *Illuſtration of this Remark.* I might add, in the laſt place, *God would not deal thus with his holy prophets of the Old Teſtament, and his apoſtles in the New, whether Jews or Chriſtians, to make them the miniſters of a ſhewy and ſhadowy diſpenſation, which had no ſubſtantial and everlaſting bleſſings belonging to it.*

III. Rem. *What a divine and diſtinguiſhing bleſſing is it to us, in this age and this nation, that the doctrine of the pardon of ſin, by the atoning blood of the Lamb, has been preached to us from our infancy, and yet continues to be preached to us by the miniſters of the goſpel?* O bleſſed be God, that we are not found in thoſe Popiſh nations, where the prieſts would teach us to truſt in maſſes and penances, in long and idle repetitions of formal prayers in Latin, and merits of the ſaints, and uſeleſs addreſſes to them, repreſented in figures of ſilver or gold, wood or ſtone, or braſs, in order to reconcile us to God; in ſprinklings with

with holy water, and other fooleries, inſtead of the only appointed ſacrifice of the Son of God; whereby they make void the bleſſed goſpel of Chriſt, and overwhelm it with their ſuperſtitious inventions? How ſad a thing would it be for us, if we were left upon a dying pillow, and had no other hopes but theſe to reſt our ſouls upon?

Here it may not be improper to give an anſwer to this *objection:* If this doctrine of the atoning blood of the Lamb that was ſlain be ſo glorious in itſelf, and ſo needful to our ſalvation, *How comes it to paſs that our Saviour ſpeaks ſo little of it in the whole of his miniſtry, while he was three years preaching amongſt the towns of the Jews?*

Anſwer. See a large and full anſwer to this objection in my Sermon on the *Atonement of Chriſt.* Vol. II. And further anſwers are repeated in my Treatiſe of *Orthodoxy and Charity united*, in the three laſt pages of the *firſt Eſſay* of the *Subſtance and Matter of the Goſpel.*

Another *objection* may be raiſed here: If this doctrine be ſo glorious, and ſo very needful, *How comes it to paſs, that it is ſo much neglected among men that profeſs Chriſtianity? And that men who believe it, are no more affected with it?*

Anſwer 1. Though a thing be never ſo uſeful and neceſſary, yet the *mere commonneſs of theſe things ſometimes is an unhappy occaſion of*

of rendering them less regarded, and less attended to. These glories and wonders of the gospel of Christ have run over our thoughts and over our tongues so many thousand times, without that due solemnity as becomes them, and without those awful ideas which those things require, that our natures are not much moved by the importance of them. Though these truths are in themselves so divine, so awful, and solemn, yet, alas! they are lost upon our passions, and they make no powerful impression there; they awaken no serious meditations, neither at the time present nor afterwards.

Answer 2. *Mankind do not keep upon their minds a deep sense of sin;* the impressions that the convincing Spirit sometimes makes, vanish away from their consciences, and the necessity and the glory of this way of salvation too soon vanishes off from our thoughts, because we are not rightly and steadily apprehensive what an infinite evil is contained in the nature of sin; and therefore the methods of pardoning mercy and forgiving grace lie with so little weight upon our spirits. The sacrifice of Christ, how exceeding precious soever it is to an awakened and convinced sinner, yet it little affects the meditations of those who have not a lively sense of sin maintained upon their spirits: When sin lies with a weight upon the soul, it awakens many a bitter sigh and groan; and a review

of the method of atonement appointed by the great God, in the blood of Chriſt, renders the remembrance of it very pleaſant and affecting. Let us therefore endeavour with all diligence to preſerve a deep ſenſe of the evil of ſin, as committed againſt the infinite Majeſty of heaven, always upon our conſciences, that the blood of Jeſus may be ever precious unto us: We ſoon forget the vile aggravations with which our ſins are attended; and therefore, the way of forgiveneſs makes ſo little impreſſion upon our ſouls.

Anſwer 3. There are few *Chriſtians who keep the love of Chriſt active and warm enough in their hearts, to give them any deep impreſſions of the invaluable price of his blood.* It is true, there are many thouſands in our land and nation who love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſincerely, though they have not ſeen him; but ſtill they are but few, in compariſon of the unknown multitudes who have heard of his name, and yet know him not, and love him not: O bleſſed Jeſus, awaken theſe thouſands of ſtupid ſinners to ſee the wonders of thy love, the amazing condeſcenſion of thy death, and the glory of this thy ſalvation. This reconciliation to God by the blood of Chriſt is one of the chief glories for which the ſaints in heaven ever praiſe him, and ever love him: This is the matter of their divine ſongs, *Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory and honour;* becauſe we were enſlaved and captivated to ſin

ſin and Satan, and we are redeemed by his blood, Rev. v. 6.

Anſwer 4. Another unhappy cauſe why theſe things make ſo ſlight an impreſſion upon our ſpirits, is, becauſe the *moſt of us are ſo buſily and deeply engaged in the things of this preſent life;* though all theſe things, which affect our preſent paſſions, are but ſhadows and trifles, in compariſon of this glorious and divine doctrine: A glorious ſubject indeed, which ſhould at all times awaken our warmeſt joy, and our loudeſt praiſes.

IV. Rem. *How divinely full of glory and pleaſure ſhall that happy hour be, when all the millions of mankind, that have been redeemed by the blood of this Lamb of God, ſhall meet together, and ſtand around him, with every tongue and every heart full of joy and praiſe!* How aſtoniſhing will be the glory and the joy of that day, when all the ſaints ſhall join together in one common ſong of gratitude, and love, and everlaſting thankfulneſs, to this Redeemer? With what unknown delight, and inexpreſſible ſatisfaction, ſhall all that are ſaved from the ruins of ſin and hell, addreſs the Lamb that was ſlain from the foundation of the world, and rejoice in his preſence?

Nor ſhall the angels be ſilent in this general and univerſal ſong of bleſſing and praiſe; for though they are not redeemed from ſin

and hell by this blood of the Lamb, yet they are repreſented in Rev. v. 11, 12, 13. as aſſiſting the ſaints, the redeemed of the Lord, in their triumphs of univerſal joy: And when they ſhall all at once, who, in the ſeveral ages of the world, have been taught to receive the grace and ſalvation of this Redeemer, ſtand together, and praiſe the Father of all things, who has given their ſouls into the hands of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, to redeem, ſanctify, and ſave them! Then God ſhall have fulfilled this bleſſed prayer of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will, that thoſe whom thou haſt given me ſhould be with me where I am, to behold my glory.*

DISCOURSE VII.

God in Chriſt is the Saviour of the Ends of the Earth:

OR,

Faith repreſented in its loweſt Degrees.

The Firſt Part of this SERMON.

Iſa. xlv. 22.

Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe.

IF theſe words were not written in the Bible, and by that means grown old and familiar to us, but if they had come immediately into the midſt of any aſſembly in Great Britain, by a voice from heaven, How would they awaken our ears, and

impreſs our ſouls! Surely every one amongſt us, that ſees himſelf in danger of periſhing, would liſten with eager attention to the word that calls and invites him to be ſaved. The Britiſh Iſlands have been reckoned by the ancients to be the ends of the earth; and we, the inhabitants thereof, ſhould be ſtrangely ſurprized and pleaſed at ſuch language from the upper world.

Our thoughts would be crowded with haſty *enquiries*, "Whence is this bleſſed "voice? Is it from heaven indeed? Who is "it that invites periſhing wretches to ſalva-"tion? Am not I within the reach and "compaſs of this call? Is it not I that am "invited? And is not the bleſſing ſuited to "my caſe and my danger? What muſt I "do to partake of it? And what aſſurance "can I have that it ſhall be conferred upon "me?"

Such *enquiries* as theſe ſhould be raiſed in us at this time, if we do but pay as juſt a deference to the voice of God when he ſpoke *of old by a prophet*, as we would if he ſpake *now by a ſudden miracle:* And though all theſe *queries* would be very hard to anſwer, if we had nothing elſe but this miraculous ſound, yet as the words lie in the Old Teſtament, ſince we enjoy the New, it is much eaſier to obtain a ſatisfying anſwer to them. Let us then try to find out,

I. Who

I. Who *is the perſon that ſpeaks.*
II. Who *are the perſons ſpoken to.*
III. What *this ſalvation is.*
IV. How *we are to come by it.*
V. What *aſſurance we can have that we ſhall poſſeſs it in the way propoſed.*

To anſwer theſe queſtions ſhall be the buſineſs of theſe Diſcourſes.

Firſt, Let us find out *Who is the perſon that ſpeaks.*

He aſſerts his own divinity in the words of my text. *I am God, and there is none elſe.* Whether the Divine Being ſpeaks this in the perſon of the *Father*, or in the perſon of *Jeſus Chriſt* the *Son*, is not of abſolute neceſſity to be determined in this place.

Perhaps it could not be expounded under the Old Teſtament any otherwiſe than concerning the great God, conſidered as the *Father of all*, the only true God, whoſe name is *Jehovah*, and who was then chiefly known to the Jews as the *God of Iſrael.* It is the God of the Jews calling the Gentiles to partake of his ſalvation. He is their *ſtrength* and their *Saviour*, and *their righteouſneſs is derived from him*, as in the foregoing and following verſes.

But when under the New Teſtament we explain theſe words, we muſt rather conſider *God in Chriſt reconciling the world of Jews*

and Gentiles to himſelf: It is the ſame one *Godhead which dwells bodily in the man Chriſt Jeſus;* for the Father and the Son are not two Gods. It is *God, the only true God, manifeſt in the fleſh:* It is *Emmanuel*, or *God with us*, who ſpeaks theſe words: It is *Chriſt Jeſus* the Lord, who is *one with the Father*, and in whom the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells, who calls *the ends of the earth to look unto him and be ſaved.* And there are ſome ſpecial reaſons that incline me to ſuppoſe theſe words of the prophet ſhould chiefly be applied in the New Teſtament to our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who makes this bleſſed offer of grace.

(1.) It is the ſame perſon to whom *the ſalvation of Iſrael* is aſcribed, and who is called a *Saviour* ſo often in the context, ver. 15. 17, 21. which is the very meaning of the name *Jeſus*, and the frequent appellation of *Chriſt* in the New Teſtament, and his particular office is to be a Saviour, and to bring ſalvation.

(2.) It is he who is appointed to be the *righteouſneſs* and the *ſtrength* of his people. Ver. 24, 25. 'Surely ſhall one ſay, In the 'Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength. 'In the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be 'juſtified.' Now this is the very name of the *Meſſiah*, Jer. xxiii. 6. 'The Lord our 'righteouſneſs:' And it is *Chriſt* who is *made righteouſneſs unto us*, 1 Cor. i. 30. And by

and

and in whom all the ſaints are to be juſtified in the language of the goſpel. It is from him alſo that his people derive ſtrength. St. Paul bids Timothy be 'ſtrong in the grace which 'is in Chriſt,' 2 Tim. ii. 1. The Epheſian converts muſt 'be ſtrong in the Lord,' Eph. vi. 10. And the apoſtle himſelf could 'do all 'things through Chriſt, who ſtrengthened 'him,' Phil. iv. 13. Now the New Teſtament (to which times the words of my text chiefly refer,) does not uſually repreſent God under the idea of the Father, as the *ſtrength* of believers, nor is he ever deſcribed there as their *righteouſneſs*.

Again, (3.) This is the perſon that brings *ſalvation to the ends of the earth*, which is the very character of the Meſſiah in the writings of the ſame prophet, Iſa. xlix. 6. 'I will 'give thee for a light to the Gentiles,' (ſays God the Father,) 'that thou mayeſt be my 'ſalvation to the ends of the earth.'

(4.) I add further, that part of this context, even the very next words, are applied to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt by St. Paul. The prophet ſaith, 'I am the Lord, and there is 'none elſe,' ver. 18. 'Unto me every knee 'ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear,' ver. 23. The apoſtle, citing the words of the prophet, ſpeaks thus: Rom. xiv. 9, 10, 11. 'Chriſt 'died, and roſe, that he might be Lord of 'the dead and the living: All muſt ſtand be-'fore the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt: For it is 'written,

'written, As I live, ſaith the Lord, every 'knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue 'ſhall confeſs to God.' Where the words *Chriſt*, *Lord*, and *God*, ſeem to be uſed promiſcuouſly for the ſame perſon. Nor would the apoſtle's argument ſeem ſtrong and cogent in that place, if the word *God* were applied only to the *Father;* for it is his deſign there to ſhew that the advancement and glory of Chriſt was the aim and the effect of our Saviour's death and reſurrection, that he might be *Lord* and Judge of all, and that *every knee and tongue* might own his Lordſhip and ſovereignty. The application of theſe words to Chriſt is again evident in Phil. ii. 10, 11. 'At the name of Jeſus every knee 'ſhould bow, and every tongue confeſs that 'Jeſus is Lord.' Though there the *glory of the Father* is expreſſed alſo.

(5.) The laſt reaſon why this text may be properly applied to Chriſt, is, becauſe many other expreſſions of the prophets, that plainly belong to the great God, the God of Iſrael, as coming to bring ſalvation to the Gentiles, are plainly applied to Chriſt in the New Teſtament. Pſal. cii. 22, 25. 'When the peo-'ple are gathered together, and the kingdoms, 'to ſerve the Lord, &c. Of old thou haſt 'laid the foundations of the earth.' This is applied to Chriſt, Heb. i. 10. So Pſal. xcvii. 1, 7. 'The Lord reigns; let the multitude 'of iſles be glad: Worſhip him all ye gods.'

Which

Which is applied to Christ, Heb. i. 6. So Isa. xxxv. 4, 5, 6. compared with Mark ix. 27. So Isa. xl. 5. compared with Matt. iii. 3. So Joel v. 32. compared with Rom. x. 13. which would be too large now to rehearse.

It will be *objected* indeed, How can it be said, that Christ is *God, and there is none else?* Is not the *Father* God also?

I *answer*, This does no more exclude the Godhead of the Father, than our Saviour's own words, John xvii. 3. exclude his own divinity, where he calls the Father *The only true God.* I think it is sufficiently evident from many places of scripture, that the Father and the Son have an inconceivable communion, and that *one and the same divine nature*, which is in the Father, dwells in the Son: For since divine names and attributes, works and worship, are ascribed to both, therefore they must both be in some sense *true God;* and since there is but *one* true God, they must both have fellowship in the *same Godhead;* or else the Son would be *another God* different from the Father; which the Bible neither knows nor allows.

These words therefore, *I am God, and there is none else*, if applied to Christ, mean no more than this: There is no other *Godhead* but that which dwells in me; but that Godhead in which I partake, by intimate communion or oneness with the Father. 'I am in the Father, and the Father is in me,' John xiv.

'In

'In Chriſt dwells all the fulneſs of the God-'head bodily,' Col. ii. 9.

After all, if we ſhould aſcribe this ſpeech entirely to God the Father, yet it muſt be confeſſed, as I hinted before, it is God in Chriſt, God *as reconciling the world to himſelf in and by Jeſus Chriſt*, and ſaving the Gentiles as his people, with an *everlaſting ſalvation?* ſo that Chriſt, the Son of God, the Saviour of men, cannot be left out of my text.

The *ſecond Enquiry* is this, *Who are the perſons to whom this gracious invitation is made?*

The text tells us, that the call reaches to *all the ends of the earth*, which we are to underſtand in a *literal* or in a *figurative* ſenſe.

Iſt, *In a literal ſenſe*, and thus it ſignifies the *Gentile nations*, who dwell afar off from Judea, thoſe that inhabit the diſtant corners of the world, and the *iſlands that are afar off, that have not heard of the fame of the* grace *or glory of God*, as Iſa. lxvi. 19. For the Jews fancied themſelves to be placed in the middle of the earth, by the peculiar favour of God; and indeed they were ſo in one reſpect, for the land of Canaan is near the borders of Aſia, where it joins to Africa, and not very far off from the limits of Europe; which three were the only known parts of the world in that day.

The

The *Britiſh iſlands* may, in a ſpecial manner, be included in this expreſſion, for they were the very *fartheſt parts of the earth* that could be known in the age of Iſaiah. This voice of compaſſion is therefore eminently ſent to us in England; the Lord ſays to every one of us, *Behold me, behold me, ye that were not called by my name*, Iſa. lxv. 1. *Look unto me* from theſe *iſles afar off*, *Ye Britons*, *Look unto me from the ends of the earth, and be ſaved.* O Sirs, if you and I could but imagine that Jeſus Chriſt calls us as it were by name, ſurely it would allure us to hearken to the voice of ſuch divine compaſſion.

IIdly, The words may be underſtood in a *figurative ſenſe*, and ſo they may ſignify *all thoſe perſons who are under the ſame ſort of character and circumſtance as the Gentiles were in that age.*

1. Ye that are in the *ends of the earth*, that are afar off from the church of God, his knowledge and his worſhip. Ye that are at the greateſt diſtance from the true Jeruſalem. Ye who are the vileſt of ſinners, utterly unholy and *without God in the world.* Ye that have nothing of grace or religion in you, *Look unto Chriſt and be ſaved;* for he came to ſave the ſinners of the Gentiles, and the vileſt of mankind.

2. Ye that have *not known the bleſſing of holy parents*, but were bred like Heathens, *who know not God*, and born in *families that call*

call not on his name: Ye that never were trained up in religious education, that were never brought near to God by a father that was in his covenant, or a mother that believed in his goſpel: Ye that were never ſolemnly devoted to God, nor acknowledge any relation to him, he calls you this day to accept his ſalvation.

Or 3. Ye that have *broke the bonds of a pious education, and ran away from God and his houſe, and his worſhip*, as the Gentiles had done from the religion and inſtructions of Noah their anceſtor: Ye that have wandered afar off from your Father's houſe, even *to the ends of the earth*, and are periſhing with the *prodigal ſon*, at a dreadful diſtance from God and heaven: Come, *look unto Chriſt, and be ſaved.*

4. Ye that are *mourning in darkneſs*, as it were at *the ends of the earth*, and on the very borders of hell, *without hope*, as the Gentiles were, Eph. ii. 12. almoſt giving up all for loſt, yielding to final deſpair, Look to Jeſus the Saviour, lay hold on the hope that is ſet before you, and live.

And while I am preaching in this place*, I may add, alſo (Fifthly,) You that *dwell in dark corners of this our land, far from any place of religious worſhip:* Ye who live by the ſides of the foreſt, or on bare and ſolitary commons, in a poor ignorant village, or in loneſome

* This was delivered in a village in the country.

loneſome cottages, where letters and reading are not known, and a Bible is a ſtrange thing, where books are ſeldom ſeen, and the word of God never ſounds: Ye that have lived hitherto like wild Heathens *in the ends of the earth*, if any ſuch are preſent in this aſſembly: Remember you are this day called as it were by the prophet from heaven, and by the word of the living God, from the lips of his miniſters on earth, to look to *God in Chriſt*, as reconciling the world to himſelf, to look to Jeſus the Saviour, in whom all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells.

The *third Enquiry* proceeds thus: *What is this ſalvation to which we are invited?*

It is the ſame ſalvation that Iſrael ſhall enjoy, the *Iſrael of God*, the people of his love: They 'ſhall be ſaved in the Lord with an 'everlaſting ſalvation,' ver. 17. In general, it is a ſalvation from ſin, and all the diſmal conſequences of it. This is the reaſon of the name Jeſus, or the Saviour, Matt. i. 21. 'He ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.' And it is the ſame *Jeſus who delivers us from the wrath to come*, 1 Theſſ. i. 10.

Particularly, (1.) It is a ſalvation from the guilt of paſt ſins, which expoſes us to divine vengeance, and a reſtoration of the perſon to the preſent love and favour of God, to peace of conſcience, and to *the hope of eternal life.*

(2.) It

(2.) It is a ſalvation and recovery from the power of ſin to the power of holineſs. It is a deliverance from vile affections and ſinful practices to the practice and the love of all piety and goodneſs: It is a recovery of our nature from the luſts of the fleſh, and the life of a brute, to the reaſonable and becoming life of a man or an angel. It is a reſcue of the ſoul from the tyranny of its own luſts, and the foul image of Satan, to a ſweet and ſacred liberty, to a religious ſelf-government, and to the image of God.

(3.) It is a deliverance from all the future puniſhments due to ſin, from the everlaſting miſery of hell, together with the conveyance of a right and title to the everlaſting happineſs of heaven. It is a bleſſing that runs through this world and the world to come. It is a total and complete deliverance from all that you feel, and all that you fear. It is all-ſufficient and eternal ſalvation.

Whatſoever your ruin, your diſtreſs, or your danger be, there is ſomething in this ſalvation that is ſuited to relieve them all; there is relief and hope in Chriſt. Let us then awaken all the powers within us to attend to the invitations of divine mercy. Are we blind and ignorant of God, and heaven, and divine things? Chriſt is the light of this lower world, John i. 9. He has *compaſſion on them that are ignorant and out of the way*, Heb. v. 2. Are we fooliſh? He is *made of God*

God wisdom to us, 1 Cor. i. 30. Are we unclean and defiled with many iniquities? *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, 1 John i. 7. Are we guilty before God? He *is our propitiation and atonement*, Rom. iii. 25. and the *Lord our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. Have we lost the divine favour? He is the *only Mediator betwixt God and man*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. And the great reconciler *to make our peace*, Eph. ii. 15. Are we unholy? He can change our natures, and *sanctify* our souls, Heb. ii. 11. Are we hard-hearted and impenitent, so that we cannot mourn for our sins as we would do? He is exalted to *bestow repentance*, as well as *forgiveness*, Acts v. 31. Are we weak, and unable to resist temptation, or to perform our duty? He is *our strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. Are we sick and dying? He is our *physician*, Matth. ix. 12. Are we *dead in trespasses and sins?* He can quicken us to a divine life, and make us live to God; for the living Spirit is with him. Christ himself is *our life;* and though the body of the saints must die, yet he shall raise it again to *life everlasting*, John v. 21, 26, 29.

Surely if we are awake, and in our right senses, there is not a soul of us in this assembly, but must feel itself under some of these unhappy circumstances. Come then, Ye sinful and distressed souls, ye helpless creatures, ye perishing dying wretches of every kind: Come, let me lead you to this hea-

venly Saviour; and may my own ſoul join with yours to partake of this full, this all-ſufficient ſalvation. Bleſſed Redeemer, make us all willing to be ſaved, and let us ſeek our help from thy hands.

I go on now to the *fourth Enquiry:* And that is, *What muſt we do in order to be partakers of this bleſſing?*

The words of the invitation are, *Look unto me.* Now when perſons in diſtreſs are called *to look* to any one for help, it implies *to truſt in him, to depend upon him, to ſeek help* from his power and goodneſs. See the hiſtory of the cripple, who ſeeing Peter and John going into the temple, *aſked an alms:* And they ſaid, *Look on us:* Upon which he *gave heed to them, expecting to receive ſomething of them,* Acts iii. 4, 5. So *looking unto God* ſignifies dependence on him, and expectation of mercy from him. 'We know not what to do,' ſaith Jehoſhaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12. 'But 'our eyes are upon thee.' So Pſal. xxxiv. 5. 'They looked unto him, and were lightened.' Micah vii. 7. When there was univerſal diſtreſs round about, ſaith the prophet, 'I will 'look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God 'of my ſalvation.'

It is evident from the ſacred, as well as the common uſe of this word, that it ſignifies the ſame as *believing* or *truſting in Chriſt* in the New Teſtament, which is the appointed means

means of our obtaining a ſhare in his ſalvation. Acts xvi. 31. 'Believe in the Lord 'Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.' Sinners of the Gentiles are required in my text to *look to him.* It is foretold by the ſame prophet, that 'to him ſhall the Gentiles 'ſeek,' Iſa. xi. 10. Which is cited and interpreted by St. Paul, Rom. xv. 12. 'In 'him ſhall the Gentiles truſt.'

The ſoul then, that is ſo far ſenſible of its paſt iniquities, its guilt, and danger of hell, and that feels ſo much of its inward ſinful nature, appetites and paſſions, as to know its own inability to procure pardon of God for ſins paſt, or to make itſelf holy for time to come, and ſees alſo in Chriſt ſuch a glorious all-ſufficiency of help and relief, and upon this account commits itſelf by prayer and humble truſt, or dependence, into the hands of Jeſus Chriſt, as an all-ſufficient Saviour, ſincerely and earneſtly deſirous of his complete ſalvation in all the parts of it, the holineſs and the happineſs; this ſoul is a *believer in Chriſt;* this ſoul has *looked* to *Chriſt* in the ſenſe of my text, and ſhall certainly *be ſaved.*

Becauſe the duty of *faith*, *truſting*, or *believing*, is ſo neceſſary to ſalvation, therefore it has pleaſed God in his word to render the notion of it plain and eaſy, by many metaphors and figures of ſpeech, to accommodate the capacities and underſtandings of the

meaneſt. And theſe are borrowed alſo from the moſt uſeful and active powers of nature, and the moſt common actions of life.

When the metaphor is taken from the *feet*, *believing* is called a *coming to Chriſt*. Matth. xi. 28. 'Come unto me, all ye that 'are weary and heavy laden, and I will give 'you reſt.' John vi. 37. 'He that cometh 'to me I will in no wiſe caſt out.' In another place it is deſcribed by *fleeing for refuge*, Heb. vi. 18. Which is a figure borrowed from the *feet* alſo; but including danger, fear, and ſpeed.

When it is borrowed from the *hands*, it is called *receiving of Chriſt*. John i. 12. 'But 'as many as received him, to them gave he 'power to become the ſons of God, even to 'them that believed on his name.' And Heb. vi. 18. *It is a laying hold on the hope ſet before us.*

Sometimes the metaphor is taken from the *tongue*, and then *faith* is deſcribed by *calling on Chriſt*. Rom. x. 11, 12, 13. 'Whoſoever 'ſhall call on the name of the Lord ſhall be 'ſaved. He that believeth on him ſhall not 'be aſhamed; for the ſame Lord over all is 'rich unto all that call upon him.'

In my text the figure of ſpeech is taken from the *eyes;* and the direction is, *Look unto me and be ſaved.* There is ſomething in this way of ſpeaking that more exactly ſuits the words *faith* and *believing;* for as they imply both

both a belief of the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt to ſave, and a truſting him for this ſalvation, ſo *looking* implies that the poor dying creature has *ſeen* the all-ſufficiency that is in Chriſt, and thence is encouraged to *hope and expect* help from him.

It is ſuch a *look* of hope and dependence as a helpleſs *creature*, *juſt dying of the peſtilence*, or a *mortal ſtab*, would expreſs toward ſome angel-phyſician that was coming to him with a vital and all-healing balm: Such a *look* as a *condemned criminal*, at the place of execution, would caſt toward ſome ſwift meſſenger afar off, who has a pardon in his hand; or ſuch a *look* as a *child*, *juſt ready to be ſlaughtered by a ſpiteful enemy*, would expreſs towards his father, well-armed, and haſting to his deliverance.

We may ſuppoſe the ſaving act of *faith* in this place to be deſcribed by the word *looking*, for theſe reaſons.

Iſt, Becauſe *the perſons who are called are in the ends of the earth:* And thus the propriety of expreſſion is preſerved, and the metaphor appears more beautiful. Thoſe who are ſo far off from Chriſt might complain, "We are feeble dying creatures, we "cannot *come* to him, as with our *feet*, nor "*lay hold* of him as with our *hands;* but we "can *look* toward him, though we are in the "ends of the earth:" As Jonah did when in the depths of the ſea. Jonah ii. 4. 'I am

'caſt out of thy ſight, yet I will look again 'towards thy holy temple.' Now the *temple* was a type of the human nature of Chriſt, in which God was pleaſed to dwell; and the Jews in their prayers, even *from the ends of the earth*, and in Heathen lands, turned their eyes towards this temple in humble hope of acceptance, 1 Kings viii. 29, 35, &c. So may the poor periſhing ſinner ſay, "Though "I am far from God and holineſs, and all "hope in myſelf or in any creatures that are "near me, yet I am within reach of the call "of Chriſt; I hear the voice of his inviting "grace; I will look towards him as my only "hope; I will keep my eyes upon him and "truſt in him; I will by him draw near to "God; and my ſoul ſhall live."

IIdly, *Believing* in Chriſt may be deſcribed in this place by *looking to him* to expreſs *the loweſt and the weakeſt degree of faith*, for the encouragement of poor convinced trembling ſinners. When perſons are awakened to a lively apprehenſion of their guilt, and a quick ſenſe of their danger, and ſee themſelves every moment liable to periſh under the wrath of an offended God, and at the ſame time feel their own utter inability to ſave themſelves, it is proper that the *act of faith whereby we are ſaved* ſhould be expreſſed in the eaſieſt manner, that may allure them toward Chriſt, the only Saviour, and may encourage them to hope. When they are, as it were, at *the ends*

of

of the earth, at a wide distance from *God* and *Christ*, they may *look* towards him, and send a wish of desire and dependence that way; like *dying drowning sailors in a storm*, that *look* towards the shore, to see if there be any hope: And such a *look* as this is ordained of God to derive all salvation from so almighty and complete a Saviour as Jesus Christ is: For it contains in it the whole nature of saving faith, as the flower and the fruit are contained in a little green bud, though the several parts and the leaves of them are not yet unfolded, nor appear to sight.

Such a *look* of a convinced sinner to Christ implies in it a distressing sense of his sin and present danger, a belief that there is help for him in Christ, and an aversion of the eye from every thing else, a renouncing all other dependences, an earnest readiness and desire to partake of this salvation, such as Christ offers it; that is, to make him holy as well as happy: And it includes also thus much of *trust* or *confidence*, that if the soul has any *hope* at all of its own salvation, Christ is the only ground of this *hope*. There is and will be some sort of *expectation* of relief from the hand to which we look, when we see ourselves perishing.

IIIdly, *Looking to Christ* for salvation is a word that shows *how little hand we have in our own deliverance from sin and death. Israel has destroyed himself*, but in God *alone is his*

help, Hoſea xiii. 9. It is not poſſible that our *looking* ſhould effect our ſalvation of itſelf, or do any thing toward it any other way, than as it is dependent on another to ſave us.

Faith itſelf is that grace that has the leaſt ſhow of ſelf-activity, ſelf-ſufficiency, or ſelf-honour in it. Rom. iv. 16. *Therefore our ſalvation is ordained to be of faith, that it might be of grace.* It is the law or conſtitution of faith, as the means of our ſalvation, that it muſt *exclude all boaſting*, Rom. iii. 27. That all that are ſaved *might glory only in the Lord*, 1 Cor. i. 31. Now when *faith* itſelf is expreſſed in ſo low and feeble exerciſe of it as *looking unto Chriſt*, it does in a moſt emphatical manner exclude every thing of *ſelf;* it utterly forbids all boaſting, and renders all the honour to Chriſt alone. How can a dying wretch pretend to any glory or merit in his own ſalvation, who only looked and was ſaved?

IVthly, There is in this way of expreſſion a natural and eaſy reference to the command *of looking* to the *brazen ſerpent*, which was a type of Chriſt, and which was to confer health and life on the wounded and dying Iſraelites, by their *looking* up to it in the wilderneſs. See John iii. 14, 15. ‘ And as ‘ Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilder- ‘ neſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted ‘ up; that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould ‘ not

'not periſh, but have everlaſting life.' Compared with Numb. xxi. 8. 'The Lord ſaid 'unto Moſes, Make thee a fiery ſerpent, and 'ſet it upon a pole; and it ſhall come to paſs, 'that every one that is bitten, when he look-'eth upon it, ſhall live.' Happy people, for whom ſo divine a remedy was provided againſt a national miſchief. So ſovereign an antidote againſt ſpreading and mortal poiſon! Thoſe that were ſtung and periſhing, though they were at the utmoſt limits of the camp, might, as it were from *the borders of the wilderneſs*, *look up* to the brazen remedy, and find health and life: From the ends of the land they looked and were ſaved.

Phyſicians were uſeleſs in that day, and all medicines inſignificant. The ſwift and fiery poiſon wrought powerfully in them that were bitten, and they were quickly brought to the borders of the grave. But before their eyes were cloſed in death, if they could but caſt *a look* towards the appointed ſignal, the divine medium of ſalvation, behold they are miraculouſly healed, and live. And which of all the ſons or daughters of Iſrael could boaſt of any thing of his own in this wondrous deliverance, when on the very confines of life and the brink of the grave they were healed by a *look* to the brazen image of a ſerpent? Such is the periſhing ſinner caſting an eye toward Chriſt for ſalvation?

But

But ſome poor trembling ſinner will be ready to ſay, "Surely this is ſo little and ſo "low an act of faith, that I am ready to "queſtion whether this can ſave me or no: "How ſhall I know whether my looking to "Chriſt is of that kind as ſhall be effectual "to my ſalvation?"

Now in anſwer to ſuch an enquiry, let the fearful ſoul remember what I have ſaid before under the *ſecond particular*, concerning the ſeveral acts of the ſoul that are ſecretly included in this *looking to Jeſus;* and aſk itſelf whether it has put forth theſe acts or no? Beſides this, I would mention alſo theſe *two properties of ſaving faith*, as it is deſcribed by *looking*.

1ſt, It muſt be ſuch a *look* as immediately *affects the heart with love and ſorrow; ſorrow for our own ſins, and love to Chriſt our Saviour.* If we have ever ſeen him with ſincere delight as a Saviour from ſin, we ſhall mourn heartily that ever we were ſinners. We cannot but repent for ſin, while we believe or hope for the forgiveneſs of it through ſuch condeſcending grace. And we cannot but love ſo compaſſionate and almighty a friend, that has delivered us from eternal deſtruction. Having ſeen Chriſt, we are weaned from ſin, and we love the Lord. Mary Magdalene, that remarkable ſinner, lying at the foot of Chriſt, *wept much* and *loved much*, Luke vii. 38, 47. You have never

never seen Christ, as your Saviour, if your sins are not the objects of your shame and sorrow, or if Jesus be not the object of your desire and love.

2d, It must be such *a look* as *changes the soul and temper into another image, even the image of Christ.* 2 Cor. iii. ult. 'We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are 'changed into the same image from glory to 'glory.' In the glass of the gospel beholding the glorious holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ, our very tempers are changed into his holy likeness, from one degree of grace to another, till it advance to complete glory; and then we shall be made more perfectly *like him, by seeing him as he is*, or *face to face*, 1 John iii. 2. There will be a shine of holiness on our conversation in this world, as reflected from the glory and holiness of Christ, whom we have seen, even as the face of Moses shone when he had seen God: Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30. That is, when he had seen the Son of God conversing with him in a visible glory.

A saving *look* of faith to our Lord Jesus Christ will happily influence all the powers of nature, and all the actions of life. This is seldom done indeed at once, but by slow degrees. The longer we behold him, and the oftener we look to him, the more we shall grow like him. We must *look to Jesus* as our example, as well as *the author and finisher of our faith;* that we may *lay aside the*

the ſin that ſo eaſily beſets us, and run with patience the race of holineſs *that is ſet before us*, Heb. xii. 1, 2. In vain do we pretend to have ſeen Chriſt, if we do not find ourſelves at all beginning to become *new creatures.*

Thus I have finiſhed my anſwer to the *fourth* Enquiry; (viz.) *How we are to come by this ſalvation;* and *why the act of faith is expreſſed by* looking to Chriſt.

DISCOURSE VIII.

God in Chriſt is the Saviour of the Ends of the Earth:

OR,

Faith repreſented in its loweſt Degrees.

The Second Part of this SERMON.

Iſa. xlv. 22.

Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe.

THIS is an invitation of ſurpriſing and ſovereign mercy to creatures in the utmoſt diſtreſs and miſery. It is the great and bleſſed God himſelf, in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, calling the Gentile world to ſalvation. It is *God in Chriſt* inviting ſinners from the *ends*

ends of the earth, and the borders of hell, to partake of heaven and happineſs. It is *Emmanuel*, God with us, who calls us *to look unto him, and be ſaved.* If we are ſenſible of our own miſery, if we are weary of ſin, and would be ſecured from the wrath to come, let us look to him as a Saviour, with an eye of faith and holy dependence.

This was the ſubject of the former Diſcourſe.

Let us now go on to the *laſt queſtion*, and learn, *What aſſurance we can have* from the text, *that we ſhall poſſeſs this ſalvation in the way propoſed;* or, that faith in God our Saviour ſhall be attended with ſuch ſucceſs.

The reaſon is given by the prophet in almighty and convincing language: *For I am God; and there is none elſe.*

This ſentence has two diſtinct parts in it, and each of them carries ſtrong reaſons for the ſupport of our faith, and the encouragement of our hope.

The *firſt* part is the aſſertion of his own Godhead, *I am God;* which carries in it theſe two ſupports or aſſurances.

1ſt, *I am God;* Therefore *I am all-ſufficient to ſave;* and therefore, Ye dying ſinners, *Look unto me, and be ſaved.* What is there that the moſt wretched of creatures can ſtand in need of, but there is a ſupply to be found among the treaſures of a God? When a God undertakes

undertakes to be a Saviour, the creature cannot perish. There is light and wisdom enough in him to make the fool wise for ever, and to scatter all our darkness: There is power enough in God to make the weakest soul strong in grace, and active in every duty: There is love enough in him to melt the most stubborn heart, and change an old enemy into an humble and willing subject. Ye may be assured of this salvation if ye look to Jesus, who is God, and therefore *mighty to save*, Isa. lxiii. 1.

There is an all-sufficiency in his blood and righteousness to atone for infinite transgressions, and to procure the everlasting favour of God: For this High Priest or Mediator himself is one with God, he is God, and his sacrifice on earth, and his intercession in heaven, are all over dignified with Godhead, and thereby become almighty for salvation.

2dly, *I am God; and therefore have a right to prescribe the means of obtaining my salvation. Look* therefore *unto me*, ye sinners, *and be saved.* I will give it to every one that *looks;* he *that believes* on me *shall be saved* from sin and death, Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 15, 16. God is rich in grace; and if he will manifest the glory and freedom of it in the grant of his new covenant, and will promise salvation to faith, and not insist upon that personal perfect obedience which once

was

was required, let the thankful ſinner rejoice, and ſubmit, and give God the honour of his abounding mercy. Let him purſue the higheſt meaſures of holineſs, under the melting influences of gratitude, and the conſtraining power of divine love.

This is naturally implied in the firſt part of the words, *I am God.* But when he adds this glorious clauſe, *and there is none elſe*, he ſeems, in the ſecond part of this ſentence, to intimate theſe three things further to us.

1ſt, *There is none that can ſave beſides me.* The ſalvation of a ſinner from the ends of the earth, from the borders of hell, is too great a work for any being that is leſs than God. What mere creature has worth enough to make compenſation to the great God for the ſins of men? Or what created power has influence enough to perſuade God to be reconciled? Is there knowledge enough in a mere fellow-creature, intimately to acquaint himſelf with all the thoughts and wants of a periſhing ſinner? Is there power enough to new-mould his nature? To ſtrike divine light into his conſcience? To bend his ſtubborn will, and ſubdue all his powers to the obedience of the goſpel? Has any mere creature power ſufficient to change a dead ſinner into a living ſaint? To ſecure him through every temptation? To fit him for the ſociety of God and angels? And to bring him through death

death to eternal glory? All this must be done if a sinner be saved.

2dly, These words also imply, *There is none but God who has a right to prescribe the means of our salvation.* If he says to sinners, *Look, and be saved;* Who shall dare forbid the blessing, or appoint a different way to obtain it? If the Lord of heaven has said to poor perishing creatures on earth, *Ye shall be saved if ye believe:* Shall the Jew dare to impose circumcision as necessary to salvation? Or the Papists command penances or pilgrimages? Or shall the conceited Pharisee require a perfection of holiness, and a righteousness made up of the works of the law, in order to obtain eternal life? The righteousness of the law saith, *Do this, and live;* But the righteousness of faith says, *Believe, and be saved,* Rom. x.

It is granted, that this *saving faith* must be a vital principle in the soul, that manifests itself in repentance, and endeavours after universal holiness; for a dead faith cannot save: But it is not our holiness that can provide acceptance with an offended God; it is faith in the sacrifice and righteousness of the Redeemer, that is the means appointed for this end. The great God has appointed it, and who shall dare to forbid? His authority is sovereign, and his appointment a sufficient warrant for our hope.

3dly, *I am God, and there is none elſe*, includes thus much alſo for the comfort and aſſurance of the believing ſinner; that *there is none can prevent your ſalvation, if you comply with the gracious propoſals. Who ſhall condemn if God will juſtify?* Rom. viii. 33, 34. Who can *pluck us out of the hand of Chriſt*, or *ſeparate us from his love?* John x. 28. Who ſhall deſtroy, if God will ſave? It is his property, and his divine prerogative, to kill and to make alive, to ſave and to deſtroy. Deut. xxxii. 39, 43. 'See now, that I, even 'I am he; and there is no god with me; I 'kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; 'neither is there any that can deliver out of 'my hand. Rejoice' therefore, 'O ye na-'tions,' ye Gentiles, together 'with his peo-'ple Iſrael; for he will render vengeance to 'his adverſaries, and be merciful to his land.' Iſa. xliii. 11, 13. 'I, even I, am the Lord; 'and beſide me there is no ſaviour. I will 'work; and who ſhall let it?'

Thus it appears, that there is abundant ground from the words of my text, for a poor periſhing ſinner to raiſe his hope to aſſurance that he ſhall be ſaved, if he does but ſincerely anſwer this gracious invitation from heaven, and truſt in God, as he is revealed in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for ſalvation, according to that deſcription of true faith which is given us in the word of God.

All

All the *Improvements* I shall make of this Discourse at present, shall be contained in these *four Reflections.*

Ist Reflection. *We may learn from this scripture, how extensive and glorious is the salvation of Christ!* How answerable is it in every respect to the weaknesses and the wants, to the miseries, dangers, and fears, of a convinced and awakened sinner? It reaches to those who are perishing in the ends of the earth. Let us survey them a little more particularly.

(1.) Is our guilt and distress exceeding great and dreadful? Behold here a salvation of rich fulness and divine all-sufficiency; for it is a God that provides it. The riches of grace, the depths of wisdom, and the efforts of almighty power are employed in this blessed work; and the mercy is expressed in the manner of a speaking God: He who said, *Let there be light, and there was light,* says also, *Look, and be saved:* And the sinner looks, and receives salvation. It is a God who *commands deliverances for Jacob,* and salvation for his people, Psal. xliv. 4.

(2.) Are our enemies great and mighty? Are the flesh, and the world, and the powers of hell engaged against the safety of our souls? Yet our salvation is perfectly and eternally secure; for he that saves us is God: No creature can divest us of it, and *there is no other*

God beſides him. 'Neither height, nor depth, 'nor principalities, nor powers, nor life, nor 'death, nor any creature, ſhall ſeparate us 'from the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus our 'Lord,' Rom. viii. 34.

(3.) Are we at ſuch a dreadful diſtance from God, that we ſeem to be on the utmoſt verge of all hope, at the ends of life and this world, at the borders of hell and deſpair? Yet we are within the reach of the call of mercy, within the ſound of the voice of Chriſt, and his extenſive grace. *Look from the ends of the earth, and be ſaved.*

(4.) Are we poor impotent creatures, that can do nothing to make ſatisfaction to God for our own ſins, and little or nothing towards the reſtoring our ſouls to the likeneſs of God, and the recovery of holineſs? Do we ſtand in need of ſuch a Saviour, that muſt *work all our works for us, and in us?* Behold ſuch a one in my text: He requires of you but to *look to him*, and truſt in him, in the manner I have deſcribed, and the ſalvation is free and ſure. Chriſt himſelf will beſtow it on us.

There are ſome poor, melancholly, deſponding creatures, who are even almoſt overwhelmed with a ſenſe of their guilt, and of the power of ſin in them, and are juſt giving up all hope, who have need to have the riches and amazing condeſcenſions of grace to be ſet before them, in ſuch a manner as this. And bleſſed be God, that his goſpel contains

contains in it ſuch abounding mercy to creatures ſo miſerable.

We may therefore cry out with joy and thankfulneſs, and holy wonder; *O the fulneſs and ſufficiency* of this ſalvation! It is God who provides it, who knows, and can ſupply all the vaſt variety of our wants! O the *wide extent* of it! It reaches to all nations, to all characters of perſons, even to the ends of the earth. O the *rich freedom* of this grace, that requires us to *look, and be ſaved!* O what free and full, what large and extenſive, what rich and ſovereign ſalvation!

IId Reflection. *What a bleſſed ſecurity of this ſalvation is given to all thoſe who comply with the invitation of this grace!* It is as ſafe as it is extenſive. No creature can take away what a God reſolves to beſtow. No finite being can prevent what an infinite Being reſolves to do. If he that is God will ſave, none elſe can deſtroy, or fruſtrate the deſigned ſalvation? Who ſhall forbid the bleſſing that the Almighty Saviour will confer on thoſe who look to him from the ends of the earth? The enemy, even the moſt malicious and powerful enemy, whoſe name is *Abaddon*, or the *Deſtroyer*, is but a creature; but the friend, the mighty and merciful friend, whoſe name is *Jeſus*, or the *Saviour*, is God, even *Emmanuel*, God with us. When he ſtands upon the throne of his mercy, and

cries out to periſhing ſinners, *Look to me from the ends of the earth, and be ſaved;* not all the powers of hell ſhall be able to deſtroy the ſinners that look to him, and accept of his ſalvation. What a glorious relief is found in my text againſt all temptations to deſpondency. Your Saviour is God, and there is none beſides him.

IIId Reflection. *How much do thoſe ſinners deſerve to periſh for ever, who will not be ſaved upon ſuch gracious terms?* In vain do you turn your eyes around you, and *look* to one creature, and ſeek to another for help; your ruin is too great, and your miſery too deep and diſmal, for any power but that of God, to raiſe and recover you. *If they who refuſed to hear the voice of Moſes, who ſpake from earth, died without mercy, of how much ſorer puniſhment ſhall ye be thought worthy, who refuſe to hearken to the voice of God ſpeaking from heaven?* Can you ever imagine it poſſible that you ſhould eſcape the divine vengeance, who neglect ſo great, ſo divine a ſalvation?

Conſider, ye ſinners, that are this day under the call of grace, though now you ſeem to be as it were at *the ends of the earth*, afar off from God and Chriſt, from all that is holy, and all that is happy, yet you are not utterly abandoned to deſtruction, while the voice of mercy ſounds in your ears. But take

take heed that ye hearken while ye are called to-day, leſt ye periſh before the morrow come. Remember this, that the ſilver trumpet of mercy will not always ſound: Chriſt Jeſus will not always ſay, *Look unto me, and be ſaved.* Ye are now upon the confines of hell; if once death open its dark gates, and hell has ſhut her mouth upon you, you will then be far out of the ſight of Jeſus the Saviour, and beyond the call of his mercy for ever.

Let me turn my voice now for a few minutes to the goſpel Iſrael, *to the children of the kingdom.* While I have been inviting the *ends of the earth* to be ſaved, and have been calling ſinners afar off from God and his church to receive Jeſus Chriſt and his ſalvation, is there any diſpenſation for you to neglect it, who dwell in the midſt of the viſible church? You who were born of holy parents, who have lived in religious families, and are by this means brought near to the kingdom of heaven? Are you ready to flatter yourſelves that you are out of danger of periſhing? Have a care of vain preſumption, and fooliſh feeble hopes. The wounded Iſraelites, who lay juſt under the brazen ſerpent of old, might die and periſh there in their own folly, if they refuſed to look up to the appointed remedy; while ſome from the diſtant borders of the camp looked, and were

ſaved: But ſuch obſtinate wretches muſt be unpitied in death.

Attend then, ye *ſinners in Zion*, and hearken to the voice of God the Saviour. Chriſt has been brought near to you in his goſpel, his promiſes, and his holy ordinances; you have read of him in his word, you have heard him ſpeak by his miniſters, and you have learned much of him from the inſtructions of your pious parents: Ye have begun to ſee ſomething of him in his glory and grace; and will you now turn your eyes away from him? Will you look upon the vanities of the preſent evil world, and fix the eye of your ſouls, your deſires, hopes, and wiſhes, upon trifle and impertinence, and neglect the offer of heavenly treaſures? Have you ſeen and heard ſo much of Chriſt already, that you have grown weary of him? Are the Lord and his ſalvation grown cheap and common things to you, of little value, not worth a look? Will you, who are near to the kingdom of heaven, refuſe to enter in, and let thoſe that come from *the ends of the earth* obtain the inheritance, and ſeize the happineſs before you? O how aggravated will your condemnation be? How dreadful the agonies of your torment, to ſee periſhing ſinners come from diſtant regions, *from the eaſt and the weſt*, from poor wicked families, and houſes of iniquity, and receive the ſalvation of Chriſt; while you are *caſt out into utter darkneſs?*

darkneſs? There ſhall be weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth, Matth. viii. 11, 12.

IVth Reflection. The laſt *Uſe* I ſhall make of this Diſcourſe, is to *take a ſhort ſurvey of that ſalvation, of the happineſs and the holineſs thereof, that is derived to a ſoul by a ſincere look of faith to Jeſus the Saviour.*

O what a *bleſſed change* is made by our *looking to Chriſt!* A change, I ſay, in the very eye-ſight of our ſouls, and in our view and ſurvey of all things round about us, ſo far as we have any concern in them! What a *bleſſed change* in our judgment and eſteem of them! We look upon things with another eye than before, and things put on a new face. Faith *looking to Chriſt* for ſalvation ſets all things in a different light before the eyes of the ſoul, and gives quite another view of them. It is like ſome heavenly glaſs applied to the organ of ſenſe, that not only aſſiſts and improves our ſight, but repreſents every thing to us in a divine light, even ſuch as they appear to the bleſſed ſpirits above.

(1.) It alters the view and appearance of *all the great and gay things of this life.* All the *treaſures, and pomp, and entertainments of this world*, were once the moſt tempting objects we could look upon; but now we *look* on the world, with all the gayeſt and the richeſt ſcenes of it, as a little mean and deſpicable thing; for we have ſeen Chriſt and

and heaven; and when the world begins to flatter us again, and to *look* great and tempting in our eyes, let us *look* again to Jeſus, and his ſalvation; that the world may loſe its ſplendour and allurement.

(2.) Once *a poor* Chriſtian *in a cottage, or in a vile raiment*, was contemptible in our ſight, now we *look* on the ſaints, even in the meaneſt circumſtance, as the *excellent of the earth;* for they are heirs of heaven, they are like to Chriſt, and formed after the bleſſed image of him whom we have ſeen with an eye of faith and love. Holy Saviour, and holy ſaints! *They*, the excellent of the earth, and *He*, the ornament of heaven.

(3.) *The Bible* heretofore we looked on but little better than a common book; or, perhaps, it was our averſion. The New Teſtament gave us no pleaſure. The true glories of it were hidden from us. The goſpel was a hidden goſpel; but now we *look upon it* as our moſt valuable treaſure and portion; and we often *look into it;* for we find Jeſus Chriſt there, with all his ſalvation.

Every part of the Bible carries quite another aſpect than once it did. We *look* upon the promiſes as an inventory of our inheritance; and we read thoſe words, *All things are yours*, with a reliſh of unknown delight, becauſe of our own intereſt in them: And as they are repeated twice, to confirm our faith, ſo we can read them often, and dwell upon them

them with pleaſure. *All are yours, for ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's*, 1 Cor. iii. 21. Then by virtue of this promiſe we can *look to the* heavens and the earth; to the ſun, moon, and ſtars; to *Paul, Apollos*, and *Cephas;* to miniſters, and to angels; to this world, and the other; to *life* and *death;* to *things preſent, and to come;* with a humble and pleaſurable belief of our intereſt in them, ſo far as we have need of them to make us holy or happy.

And as we *look on* the *promiſes* of the Bible with another eye than formerly, ſo we behold *the precepts* of it in a ſweeter light: We read them now as the rules of our happineſs, as the model of our new nature, as the holy tranſcript of the perfections of God, and the bleſſed advices of our dear Redeemer. We look on his *commandments*, and behold they are *no more grievous to us;* for his *law is our delight*, 1 John v. 3. Pſal. cxix. 77.

As for the *threatenings* of the book of God, we once beheld them, perhaps, with a regardleſs eye, and a ſtupid heart: Or if we were awakened, we read them with utmoſt terror, as the meſſengers of our damnation: We beheld them as ſo many angels with flaming ſwords, to forbid our entrance into Paradiſe. But ſince we have *ſeen Jeſus* with an eye of ſaving faith, the *threatenings* of ſcripture have no more ſuch a dreadful aſpect. Since the *ſword has awoke againſt the Man*

Man

that was God's *Fellow*, and all the neceſſary vengeance was executed on Chriſt, our ſurety, we behold the threatenings as diſarmed of their terror, and no longer a bar to our ſalvation.

(4.) The *face of God*, ſhining in his terrible attributes of *holineſs* and *juſtice*, was dreadful to our ſouls, ſo that we could not *look upon* him, and we turned our eyes away from God: As for his attributes of love and mercy, we had no reliſh of them; for we had no ſolid hope in them. We ſaw nothing in God deſirable and delightful to us: We ſtood afar off; we neglected and forgot him; or elſe we hid ourſelves from him, as Adam did, becauſe we were afraid. But now, ſince we have beheld *God in Chriſt*, as *reconciling ſinners to himſelf*, now we can look upon him in all his awful and his peaceful attributes without diſmay; we can ſurvey and dwell upon all his glories with a ſacred pleaſure; and lift up our eyes towards him with humble confidence, in prayer or in praiſe; for we *behold* him as God reconciled, and a Father, ſince we have ſeen Jeſus the Mediator, and truſted in his name.

(5.) With what ſurpriſe and overwhelming fear did we once *behold approaching afflictions*, when *we were without God, without Chriſt, and without hope?* But now we can *look upon* ſufferings and ſorrows without being overwhelmed by them; we can *look upon* the huge

huge swelling waves without painful apprehensions, and see the floods rise high without fear of being drowned; for we have *seen Jesus* as it were *walking on the water;* and we have heard him *saying*, *It is I, be not afraid.* We can look to him when we are afar off from our friends, even in the ends of the earth, and find light in darkness, and relief in the midst of our distresses.

(6.) How formidable once was the *face of death.* No pencil can describe the monster so hideous to the sense, as he appeared constantly to our awakened souls, before we had seen Christ. What horror did our spirits feel, and our flesh shuddered at the thought of his approach! How frightfully, and yet how justly, did our guilty fancy paint him, and all his attendants, in their terrible array! But the saint *looks on death* now as an harmless thing, for he has seen Jesus disarm him; Christ has *abolished sin*, and taken away the sting from *death.* The lively Christian can *look on it* as a friend, or rather as a slave subdued to the service of his Lord, sent on a glorious message, to fetch him to dwell where his blessed Lord is. *They shall be where I am, to behold my glory*, John xvii.

(7.) The man who has seen Jesus with an eye of faith, can look to the *last great tribunal* without terror; for he knows and is acquainted with Christ the Judge: He has seen him, and trusted all the important concerns of that day into

into his hands. 'I know,' ſaith the Chriſtian, 'whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded 'that he is able to keep all that I have com-'mitted to him unto that day,' 2 Tim. i. 12. Therefore he can ſee *the judgment-ſeat, and the books opened*, without diſmay or fearful expectation; for he has ſeen Jeſus croſs out all his ſins with the blood of his ſacrifice: Chriſt has cancelled them for ever from the great regiſter of heaven, the book of divine remembrance; and has ſhewn him his own name *written in the Lamb's book of life, from the foundation of the world.*

(8.) Then he may turn his eyes to all that *glorious aſſembly on high;* he may *look* on the ſaints in their robes of light, as companions of his bleſſedneſs, and the troops of angels as miniſters of fire, to execute vengeance on all his enemies; and heralds to prepare his way to the upper heavens. He may fix his eyes with moſt intenſe and tranſporting delight on Chriſt his ſovereign Lord, and behold him hereafter with eyes of ſenſe, amidſt the honours of heaven, whom he had beheld here with an eye of faith, amidſt the ſufferings of the croſs, and the agonies of the garden. "This is he, ſays the ſaint, whoſe voice of "mercy I heard in yonder periſhing world, "and to whom I looked *from the ends of the* "*earth*, that *I might be ſaved.* I believed "him then to have all the fulneſs of the "Godhead dwelling in him bodily; and as "God,

" God, manifeſt in the fleſh, I worſhipped
" him, and truſted in him. I behold him
" now as the brightneſs of his Father's glory,
" and his divineſt image: I find him to be
" a complete and all-ſufficient Saviour; for
" I ſtand poſſeſſed of his divine ſalvation.
" *My knee bows, and my tongue confeſſes that*
" *Jeſus is Lord.* He is *one with the Father.*
" *To him that ſits upon the throne, and to the*
" *Lamb, be bleſſing and honour, power and*
" *glory, for ever and ever.* Amen."

DISCOURSE IX.

FAITH built on KNOWLEDGE.

PREACHED 1711.

The First Part of this SERMON.

2 Tim. i. 12.

——— *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, againſt that day.*

WHEN this Epiſtle was written to Timothy, St. Paul, the writer of it, was a priſoner at Rome; there he lay under a heavy chain, and was expoſed to public ſhame for the ſake of the goſpel: He had death in a near view, and was preparing for the bloody ſtroke. For in the ſixth verſe of the laſt chapter he ſays, 'I am now ready 'to

'to be offered, and the time of my departure 'is at hand: I have fought the good fight, 'and my courſe is finiſhed.'

But he ſeems to aſſure himſelf upon the words of my text, and grows bold upon this foundation of ſolid comfort: As though he ſhould ſay, "None of theſe things move me, "nor am I afraid to die; for I ſhall not be "loſt: I ſuffer; *but I am not aſhamed: I know* "*whom I have truſted* to take care of me in "death, and all beyond it; even to the great "day of retribution."

It is pleaſing and glorious to ſee this apoſtle, this little mean figure of a man, whoſe preſence and whoſe ſpeech were both contemptible; (2 Cor. x. 10.) to ſee how he builds upon this hope, and aſſumes divine courage in the midſt of pain and ſhame, in the very face of ſcandal and martyrdom. "Let me die out of this world, though with "infamy, violence, and blood; but I have "been told of life, and joys, and honours, "in the world to come; and that with ſuch "evidence, as to conſtrain my belief: And "*I know whom I have believed.* Let my barbarous executioner and the ſword rob me "of the ſhort remains of this preſent life; "but I have committed my ſoul, and all my "infinite concerns, for a long *hereafter*, into "the hands of an almighty and a ſure friend, "*and I am perſuaded he is able to keep what I* "*have committed to him againſt that day.*"

This is the language of a lively hope, and these are the words that have administered constant support to many dying Christians. Now that such a hope may appear to be rationally built upon this text, and that our present meditations and discourse may proceed with more regularity and profit, I must briefly explain the words.

The chief things that want any explication are these four.

I. Who is this great friend of St. Paul's, whom he has known and believed.

II. What he means by *believing*.

III. What it is he has committed into the hands of this friend.

IV. What is that day, or period of time, when he expected to find all safe which he had thus intrusted him with.

1st, *Who is this great friend of St. Paul's, whom he had believed, and of whose ability he was so well persuaded?*

These words can be properly applied to none so well as to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Mediator; and that for these reasons.

It is he that is spoken of in the context, verse 10. 'Who has abolished death, and 'brought life and immortality to light thro' 'the gospel:' And it is this gospel of Christ for

for which Paul is not aſhamed to ſuffer, in the words juſt before the text.

It is Chriſt who is recommended as the proper object of belief or truſt in the New Teſtament, as God the Father was under the Old: So our Lord himſelf declares, John xiv. 1. 'Ye believe in God; believe alſo in me.' This was the great duty that all the firſt preachers of the goſpel preſſed upon their hearers, even a belief on Jeſus Chriſt. This was the perpetual ſubject of St. Paul's exhortations, the matter of his practice, and the ground of his hope; the inſtances are ſo numerous, that it is needleſs and endleſs to collect them.

It is Jeſus Chriſt into whoſe hands the Father has put all his ſaints and children, and committed them to his care, that he may keep them, John xvii. 6, 9, 12. 'Thine they were, 'and thou gaveſt them to me out of the world; 'and I have kept them through thy name.' And therefore into the ſame hands a child of God moſt naturally commits himſelf.

IIdly, What does the word *believe* ſignify here?

By *believing* we are here to underſtand an aſſent to the revelation that Jeſus Chriſt had made of himſelf, as ſent from the Father to ſave ſinners, and a truſt in him for this ſalvation: For the word πεπίστευκα, in the Greek, naturally includes both, and the following part

of the verſe confirms this ſenſe; which will be made more completely evident in the improvement of this Diſcourſe.

Here let it be remarked, from the bold and pathetic manner of ſpeaking, that the apoſtle appears as a ſtrong believer, as one that had much acquaintance with Chriſt, and long truſted in him, and every day gained further confirmation of his faith. Obſerve the expreſſion, *I know whom I have believed*, and am come to a confident *perſuaſion* in myſelf *that he is able*, &c. It is a faith riſing to divine joy; for he mentions it as his ſupport againſt ſhame and ſuffering.

IIIdly, When we enquire, *What it is that the apoſtle committed to Chriſt?* I think there is no need to limit or confine the truſt; all that belongs to poor ſinful man, which God the Father had appointed Chriſt to take care of, may be included in this *depoſitum*, this important truſt. I have committed my whole perſon, ſoul and body, with all my ſpiritual concerns in this world, and all my everlaſting intereſt in the world to come, into the hands of Chriſt; my ſoul, and the affairs of my eternity. And this the apoſtle ſeems to have chiefly in his eye, becauſe he was now ready to leave the body, and all things of this preſent life. So Chriſt on the croſs commits his ſoul into the hands of his Father, Luke xxiii. 46. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my 'ſpirit.'

'ſpirit.' So Stephen, the firſt martyr, addreſſes himſelf to Chriſt, Acts vii. 59. 'Lord 'Jeſus receive my ſpirit.' So David, by a ſpirit of propheſy, in evangelic expreſſions, betruſts his ſoul with God his Redeemer, Pſal. xxxi. 5. 'Into thy hands I commit my 'ſpirit; thou haſt redeemed it, O Lord God 'of truth.'

IVthly, *What is that day, that great day, which the apoſtle means in the text?* Without doubt, he refers to the *laſt judgment*, which is *that day*, by way of eminence, that day when the works of all other days ſhall be reviewed, when all mankind ſhall appear together upon the earth, that have lived in ſeveral ſucceſſive days, and years, and ages, and a deciſive ſentence ſhall be paſſed upon all, without a poſſibility of reverſe: The day on which the fate of their eternity ſhall depend, and be determined. It is the cuſtom of the apoſtle to ſpeak of this day in ſuch a way of abſolute eminence, without particular deſcriptions: So he does twice in this ſame epiſtle; chap. i. 18. and iv. 8. And it is expreſsly evident in 2 Theſſ. i. 10. he means this laſt great day, when *Chriſt ſhall appear in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey him not; and ſhall come to be glorified in all them that believe.*

Though believers in Chriſt, who have committed themſelves to his charge, find their ſouls ſafe in the moment after death,

and the beginning of their intellectual heaven, yet this is more insensible to other men, and unseen to the world: The day of judgement is a more remarkable and conspicuous day in the eyes of all the creation, angels and men; in this day shall Christ openly deliver up his great trust to the Father, who committed all elect sinners into his hands: In this day shall he make it appear, that he has been able and faithful to keep whatsoever God and the saints have committed to him.

Besides, till this day come, Christ has not fulfilled his commission, nor answered his trust for which he is engaged to his Father, and to believers; for this is one part of it, that he should take care of their dying bodies, and *raise them up at the last day*, John vi. 39. The apostle, though he well knew the happiness of separate souls, that were *absent from the body*, and immediately present with the *Lord*, yet he more frequently points to this bright and distant day of the resurrection, when he invites our hope abroad beyond the limits of life and time, to give it the fairest and the longest prospect.

Thus having sufficiently unfolded whatsoever might seem doubtful in the text, let us proceed to a more particular improvement of it: And to this end we may comprise the sense in this one Proposition or Doctrine.

Doctrine.

Doctrine. *A Christian lays a solid foundation for his faith and joyful hope in the knowledge of the person whom he trusts.* He has some good acquaintance with that great friend of his to whom he commits all his concerns from time to eternity; and upon this he builds his confidence and comfort; and from this he rises to joy and triumph. The words of my text are the language of an advanced and well-grown faith; and both my *doctrine* and *discourse* keep this in view; yet the nature and practice of a sinner's first addresses to Christ by faith, may be easily learnt hereby; as I shall shew hereafter.

To confirm and improve this doctrine, let us consider,

I. What it is that a *Christian* knows of Christ, that engages his trust and confidence?

II. What sort of knowledge it is? And how he comes by it? And

III. What useful Remarks may be drawn from this subject?

First, *What is it that a Christian knows of Christ, that engages his trust in him?*

The Answer may be comprised under these two general Heads; *(viz.)* The personal qualifications of Christ, and his special character, or commission, as one appointed to take care of souls.

Ist, *A believer knows the particular and personal qualifications of Christ, which render him able to take care of what is committed to him.* Now these qualifications depend not only upon the constitution of his person, as one in whom God and man are united, but also upon the labours of his life, and the virtue of his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, and his exalted state. Let us descend a little into particulars upon this subject, and take a short and pleasurable survey how well our Lord is qualified to take the charge of souls, and of their eternal welfare.

1st, *He has almighty power*, and can secure whatsoever is committed to him, against all oppositions and dangers; for it is by him that God the Father created all things, and he hath sufficient influence over all the works of his hands; a divine ability to save his favourites, and destroy all that oppose: to ensafe them from every peril that arises from their own weakness, and defend them against every adversary that designs mischief. It was by him that our souls were formed at first in his own and his Father's image; and he can new-mould them into the same form, though it be quite defaced. What iniquity is there in nature, which such almighty grace cannot subdue? What wild imagination, or rebellious thought, in man, which a God cannot reduce to obedience? Should all the wicked of the earth conspire to ruin a Christian, what

what could the impotent malice of creatures avail, if the Creator forbid their violence; or if he who made them encompaſs the ſaint round as with a wall of braſs, and cover him as with a ſhield? And what can Satan the tempter or the deſtroyer do, if Jeſus hold him in his chain, and forbid him to come nigh the believer? The lion of the great deep cannot ſo much as roar, to affright the meaneſt lamb of the flock, without the permiſſion of Chriſt their Shepherd. He can neither tempt us from our duties, nor rifle us of our comforts, if the Son of God command him to ſilence. And what are all the angels in heaven but the ſervants of Chriſt, *all miniſtering ſpirits, ſent forth to ſecure them that are heirs of ſalvation?* Heb. i. 14. What is there within us, or without us, in heaven, earth, or hell, that can endanger our happineſs, if he that is one with God, and almighty, undertake to ſave us? To him therefore we commit this great undertaking.

2dly, *He has inconceivable treaſures of knowledge, and wiſdom unſearchable.* He takes notice of the moſt ſecret and diſtant dangers to which his favourites can be expoſed: Hell is naked before him, and the dark counſels of deſtruction have no covering: He confounds all the policies of darkneſs, and knows how to infatuate Satan, the moſt ſubtile ſpirit, when he contrives miſchief againſt the ſaints. And when our own hearts, for want of

of foreſight, run giddily, and wander into ſnares, he can ſurround us with divine light for the recovery of our wanderings, and guide us in a ſafe path homewards. The hidden workings of ſin in the inmoſt chambers of the ſoul are open to his eyes, Heb. iv. 12, 13. And he knows how to prevent it from bringing forth fruit unto death.

But, on the other hand, his own counſels are laid unſearchably deep; nor can all hell fathom or undermine them. He is ſuppoſed to be repreſented under the character of *Wiſdom*, ſhewing her power, Prov. viii. 14. 'Counſel is mine, and ſound wiſdom; I am 'underſtanding; I have ſtrength. He knows 'how to deliver the godly out of every temp-'tation,' and to preſerve them to his own kingdom. This glorious perſon is fit to be truſted with the infinite concerns of weak and ignorant creatures.

3dly, *His love and compaſſion, and willingneſs to take the charge of ſouls*, is equal to his wiſdom and power. Though this be not expreſſed in the text, yet it is neceſſarily included; for how could the apoſtle ſay with joy, *I know whom I have truſted*, if he knew only that he was *able to ſave*, without believing him willing? Or why ſhould St. Paul truſt him with ſo valuable a thing as his eternal welfare, if he did not know him compaſſionate as well as mighty? But his willingneſs is abundantly evident by all that he

he did, and all that he ſuffered, to procure ſalvation for us; for he tells us, it was the very deſign of his coming, to *ſeek and ſave that which was loſt*, Luke xix. 10. And he muſt be willing to keep that which he undertakes to ſeek and to ſave.

It was his love and willingneſs to take care of ſinners, that brought him down from heaven to an incarnation, and veiled the dignity of his divine glory in the lowly and debaſed figure of a man, in the *likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*. A believer reads his willingneſs in the very features of his manhood; and every poor and painful circumſtance of his life writes his love ſtill in fairer characters. What mean all his labours and wearisome travels? His preachings and pleadings with obſtinate men all the day, in towns and villages? And his midnight wreſtlings with God upon the cold mountains? What mean his kind invitations, and his melting language, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, let him come unto me, and drink? Come unto me all ye that are weary, and I will give you reſt?* Come to the phyſician, ye that are ſick, and I will heal you. *Come, ye that are heavy laden*, and I will releaſe you. *He that comes unto me ſhall in nowiſe be caſt out.* What can be the deſign of all theſe tender expreſſions, but to acquaint us with his willingneſs to take care of thoſe ſinners that commit their ſouls to him? What means his ſubmiſſion to cruel ſufferings, and

to

to bitter reproaches? His agonies in the garden? The convulsions of his nature, and the tortures of his soul? Tortures that drew *cries and tears* from the Son of God? And *his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even to* astonishment and *death.* What do all those speak, if not love and willingness to save? What is the language of his arms, when spread naked on the cross, but "Come unto me, sinners, "and I will embrace you?" This is the voice of every wound of his body, while his breath expired amidst blood and groans. Nor can we understand any thing by all these scenes of wo, if we cannot read love in them, and a hearty willingness to secure believing sinners from the wrath to come.

4thly, *He hath perfect righteousness, and atoning blood.* So that the most guilty soul may trust him safely; for he has obeyed, and he has suffered: He has procured pardon for sin, and justification unto eternal life: He has made satisfaction for the vilest of crimes, and for the chief of sinners. He has a human nature that could die, and the indwelling divinity, that could put infinite dignity into his death, and render it a full atonement for the heaviest guilt: He has paid our immense debts, and justice acknowledges the receipt in full: He has fulfilled the commands of God's perfect law, which we could never fulfil: And he has bore the curse which would have made us for ever miserable: And

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all this not for himſelf, but in our ſtead; and that with this deſign, that he might redeem us from the curſe of the law, and preſent us before God in his own righteouſneſs, that we might receive the adoption of ſons, and be for ever accepted in the Beloved, Gal. iii. 13. and iv. 5. Eph. i. 6. Here is an all-ſufficient righteouſneſs, in which the ſevere eye of the holineſs of God can find no flaw or defect, which is the foundation of our hope; whereas our righteouſneſſes are mingled with many defilements. Here is a *righteouſneſs that ſhall not be aboliſhed*, though the heavens wear away, and the earth wax old. Therefore *the iſles* where ſinners dwell *ſhall wait upon him, and on his arm ſhall they truſt*, Iſa. li. 5, 6. It was the great buſineſs of the Meſſiah *to finiſh tranſgreſſion, to make an end of ſin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs*, Dan. ix. 24. And this is of ſuch neceſſity to our ſalvation, becauſe of the perpetual frailties of our nature, that a poor trembling believer could not venture his ſoul ſafely into any hands but where ſuch a glorious righteouſneſs was found; and from this character our Saviour is pleaſed to take one of his honourable titles, Jer. xxiii. 6. *The Lord our righteouſneſs.* Surely therefore, (ſaith a humble, convinced, and guilty wretch,) in ſuch a one will I truſt, for I have no merit in me to obtain pardon, I have no righteouſneſs of my own to render me accepted with God,

God, and I must for ever perish without it. *Surely in the Lord* I shall find *righteousness*, as well as wisdom *and strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. And to him I commit my soul.

5thly, *He has great interest with God the Father*, and always prevails when he pleads. *Father, I know that thou hearest me always*, John xi. 42. He never prays in vain, for he is ever worthy of the Father's ear. He appears in all the virtue of his original Sonship, even when he appears in the name of sinful worms; and when he pleads their cause before the throne, he does it in all the power of his meritorious righteousness, and with the cries of his dying blood. We might doubt of audience when we address ourselves to the great and dreadful God; for we are but his creatures, who have sinned against him, but he is the only begotten Son. We may well stand at a distance, and tremble, for we are rebels; but he is perfect in his loyalty and obedience. We are defiled, but he is pure and unspotted; we might expect thunder and destruction from the Almighty, for the Lord abhors all sin. For such guilty wretches to come before the face of God, though with groans and tears, would but set our rebellion and guilt before his eyes, awaken his wrath, and put him in mind of deserved vengeance; but when Christ appears as a petitioner, he is approved and heard: For he is the Son of his love, he is all holiness:

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No man can come unto the Father but by him, John xiv. 6. Therefore we dare not truſt ourſelves in meaner hands. *He is able to keep what is committed to him unto the great day*, and *to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come to God by him; ſeeing he ever lives to make interceſſion for them;* and is *ſuch an High-Prieſt as the Son of God, holy, harmleſs, and undefiled*, Heb. vii. 25, 26. He pleads for aliens and ſtrangers, in the virtue of his Sonſhip; for criminals, in the efficacy of his obedience; and we joyfully commit ourſelves, poor ſinful and periſhing ſtrangers and criminals, to him, to be introduced into the Father's preſence, becauſe he has the moſt powerful influence, and the ſtrongeſt intereſt in heaven.

6thly, *He lives for ever.* Rev. i. 18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I live for evermore.* Amen. He therefore that hath known death by experience, and now ſtands firmly poſſeſſed of eternal life, is the moſt proper perſon that I can truſt with all my concerns, my fleſh and ſpirit, for life and death, for time and eternity. Should I preſume to make myſelf my own keeper, yet my utmoſt care could pretend to reach no further than the term of this life; for whither I go in death is all darkneſs to me, if I had not known *Chriſt* and his *goſpel*, *who has brought life and immortality to light*, 2 Tim. i. 10.

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And notwithstanding all those discoveries of the future state, I am still uncapable of providing for myself in the invisible world. My soul and body are then separated, and I cannot keep them together, nor take care of them apart. Where this world of souls is I know not, nor can I tell how to secure my best interest there, or direct myself in the right way to the region of sanctified spirits in that world, where I am so much a stranger; all the land of death is in a great measure the region of darkness still; it is a vast unknown country, and far the biggest part of it is a burning climate, a land of torment, sorrow, and despair; and there are a thousand roads that lead down to this gulph of wretchedness; and how shall my poor wandering soul, when dismissed from this flesh, find the way to the land of light, since I know not the paths, nor the dangers of the way, and there is no companion in death to guide me through the dark valley? How shall I dare to plunge into eternity, except some mighty friend be there to take care of me, and conduct me to the seat of the blessed?

But my Lord Jesus lives in that unseen world; he has passed through the region of death, and knows it well; he has the keys of death, and the separate state, and is acquainted with all the avenues of it; he is Governor of the land of blessedness, and the fittest Guardian to whom I can commit my departing

departing ſpirit. I leave alſo my poor remains of fleſh to his care: Theſe limbs I leave to moulder into duſt, under the wakeful eye of his providence; for he is Lord of this lower world too, and he will raiſe my fleſh to immortality, and rejoin it to my ſoul at the great day.

7thly, In the laſt place, I might add, *The faithfulneſs of Chriſt to fulfil all that he undertakes*, is another qualification that encourages our truſt: His name is the *Amen*, *the faithful and the true*, Rev. iii. 14. *The Lord is faithful, who ſhall eſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil;* therefore (ſaith the apoſtle to the ſaints at Theſſalonica,) *We have confidence in the Lord touching you*, 2 Theſſ. iii. 3, 4. His ſincerity is above all poſſibility of being corrupted, and what he once deſigns he will accompliſh: *Whom he loves, he loves to the end*, John xiii. 1. He is unchangeable in his compaſſion from the very truth of his nature; his zeal and watchfulneſs can never admit him to be forgetful one moment, of all the infinite concerns that a believer has intruſted with him. His faithfulneſs adds force and ſtrength to all the encouragements that our faith receives from all the other qualifications of Chriſt; and, if I know all theſe excellencies are found in him, I am perſuaded he is able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt; and I leave my all with him till the laſt day.

Thus we have briefly run through the *perſonal qualifications* of Chriſt. But

IIdly, Beſides theſe his perſonal qualifications, which are the objects of a believer's knowledge, and the motives of his faith, there is another thing that engages his confidence in him; and that is, *his ſpecial character and commiſſion as a Mediator, which he has received from the Father*, and which he has voluntarily undertaken to fulfil. Hereby he ſtands obliged to uſe all his perſonal abilities to take care of ſinners that are committed to his charge. He often ſpeaks of his being *ſent from the Father to do his will.* See John vi. 39. 'And this is the Father's will 'that hath ſent me, that of all which he hath 'given me I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould 'raiſe it up again at the laſt day.'

By this commiſſion Chriſt has a right and authority to exerciſe all his natural powers and capacities to ſecure the ſouls of believers. The juſtice, and wiſdom, and holineſs, as well as the grace and mercy of God the Father, joined to commit this authority into his hands. And it is in this ſenſe that *all power in heaven and earth is given him*, Matt. xxviii. 13. And *he is Head over all things for the church*, Eph. i. ult. When we ſay, that all gifts and all graces are treaſured up in the hands of Chriſt, to be communicated to his people, we mean, that as a commiſſioned Mediator, he has a rightful authority to exert all

all his natural and divine powers in the communication of gifts and graces, and holy influences of the Spirit; which power neither he nor his Father did think proper to be exerted, without satisfaction made for sin as Mediator.

Behold then our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, and the Son of God; behold him in all the sufficiency of the united Godhead, and in all the glory and authority of his mediatorial commission, fully capacitated to keep whatsoever is committed to him! The believer sees this and rejoices; he beholds all the souls of sinners designed for salvation given into the hands of Christ by the Father, to keep; which Christ himself often speaks of, in the xvith and xviith chapters of the Gospel of St. John. And he reads those words of his Lord with abundant joy, 'My Father which gave them me is greater 'than all, and none is able to pluck them out 'of my Father's hand: I and my Father are 'one; and I give unto them eternal life, and 'they shall never perish, neither shall any 'pluck them out of my hand,' John x. 28, 29, 30.

Now, says the believer, shall I not venture my eternal state in those hands where God himself has laid it? Shall I not chuse him to be my Guardian in this my weak and helpless state, whom the Father has appointed for this very purpose, and trusted with the care

of all his children? Who is so fit to be my shepherd as that glorious person to whom the Father has committed the charge of all his sheep? God the Father knows him well, that he is equal to the great undertaking, or else he would never have intrusted him with the souls of his chosen ones; and I through his grace have beheld such abilities, such love, and such faithfulness in him, that he is sufficient to answer the weighty charge; therefore I have intrusted him with my all, and *I know whom I have trusted.*

Besides, says the Christian, this is the person whom God has ordained to take care of his own infinite honours, as well as of the immortal concerns of men; and where can I trust my soul better than where the all-wise God has trusted all his own glory? The government of heaven and earth, of angels and men, is laid upon his shoulders, and of his dominion there is no bound, there is no end, Isa. ix. 6. The biggest affairs of kingdoms and nations, all the revolutions and concerns of the worlds of nature, grace, and glory, are committed to Christ the Mediator; all *things are delivered into his hands by the Father*, John iii. 35. And surely, saith the Christian, there is none like him to take care of my soul; since God himself, upon a survey of all the creation, found none like him; none so fit to be intrusted with all his own infinite concerns, in all the worlds which he hath

hath made. *I know therefore whom I have believed*, when I believed in Jesus, and *I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.*

Secondly, After having discovered what it is that a *Christian knows of Christ, that engages his belief, and firm confidence;* we proceed to enquire, *What sort of knowledge this is, or how he comes to know him so as to trust in him, and rejoice in his faith?*

The *Answer* may be reduced to these two Heads: A believer that is arrived at such a knowledge of Christ, has obtained it partly by the *testimony* of others, and partly by his own *experience.*

Ist, It is a *knowledge that arises from the testimony of others.* And this sort of knowledge is generally called *faith;* that is, the believing of any proposition upon the authority of those that relate it; and, according as the witnesses that make the report are more credible, and more numerous, so we give the firmer assent to their testimony; our faith grows so much the stronger, and our knowledge is the more certain. Now the witnesses that give evidence to the power and faithfulness of Christ our Saviour, are so gloriously credible in themselves, and so many in number, that a believer has the most rational and solid ground for his faith. Let us

take a ſhort ſurvey of theſe witneſſes, and humbly examine their teſtimony.

God himſelf, the all-wiſe, the true, and the eternal God, in the perſon *of the Father*, *has borne witneſs* from heaven to his Son Chriſt Jeſus in all ages. This he did in old time by viſions and voices, by prophecies and holy inſtitutions. It is of him that *God has ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, ſince the world began*, Acts iii. 21. What is the *ſeed of the woman*, that ſhould *break the ſerpent's head*, Gen. iii. 15. but a promiſe of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Saviour, given to Adam, to prevent his deſpair; and a teſtimony of his power to deſtroy the works of the devil, and to ſave fallen man? What is the *ſeed of Abraham*, *in whom all nations ſhould be bleſſed*, Gen. xxii. 18. but a prophecy of the bleſſings of life and ſalvation to the nations of the earth, by Jeſus the Son of Abraham? Who was *Shiloh*, of whom Jacob propheſied, *To him ſhall be the gathering of the people*, but Chriſt, who was ſent of God, that the Gentiles might commit their ſouls into his hands, and join themſelves to him as their Head and Governor?

It would be endleſs to run through all the meſſages from God, which the inſpired prophets of old delivered to men, and which gave divine teſtimony to the Saviour that ſhould be born. Who was the *Angel of the covenant*, that was ſent to conduct the Jews through

through the wilderneſs, and to keep that nation, and to bring them ſafe to Canaan? Who was the *Captain of the Lord's hoſt*, that was ſent and appeared to Joſhua, engaging for the protection of him and his army? What was the viſion that appeared to Iſaiah, the *Lord ſitting upon a throne in much glory* and power, but ſo many prefigurations of the Son of God, that was to take our nature upon him, and become a Saviour? What were all theſe appearances of God in the form of man, but ſigns and pledges, and (as it were) eſſays towards his incarnation? What were the types of the Old Teſtament, but emblems of deliverance, atonement, and ſalvation, that were to be conferred by Chriſt upon thoſe ſinners that would truſt him with their ſouls? What was *the ark* wherein Noah was ſaved, when he committed his life to the keeping of God in that floating houſe, amidſt a flood of waters, but an aſſurance of ſafety to thoſe ſinners who make Chriſt their refuge, when the floods of divine wrath riſe high? What was the deſign of the *bloody ſacrifices*, the *ſacrifices of expiation*, but to hold forth the method whereby Chriſt ſhould ſecure guilty ſouls from death?

Time would fail me to ſpeak of the brazen and the golden altar; of burning the fleſh of beaſts, and the ſmoking incenſe; of the ark of the covenant where the law was kept, and the cover of it, which was called the

mercy-ſeat, where the God of glory dwelt under the form of a bright cloud: Time would fail me to ſpeak of the tabernacle of Moſes, and the temple of Solomon; of the cities of refuge, appointed for the ſafety of caſual murderers; of the high-prieſt, of his garments, and of his offices, who was to keep the names of the tribes of Iſrael upon his breaſt and upon his ſhoulder. Theſe were all the inſtitutions and appointments of God himſelf, to aſſure us by various carnal emblems of the fulneſs of that ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; for which no ſingle emblem was ſufficient.

Let us deſcend to later times, and behold God the Father giving teſtimony to his Son, by kindling a new ſtar in the heavens at his birth, and ſending it as a guide to lead the wiſemen from the eaſt, and from the riſing ſun, to a greater and ſweeter light, the Morning Star, and the Sun of Righteouſneſs. He ſent a voice from heaven at his baptiſm, and pronounced in diſtinct language, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* Twice more did he ſpeak from heaven, and with an audible voice, in the time of the life of Chriſt, atteſt this miſſion: A believer knows many of theſe things, and receives the teſtimony of God. And *this is the witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son, that eternal life is in him*, 1 John v. 9, 11.

Chriſt

Chriſt himſelf is another witneſs that teſtifies his own ability to ſave ſinners, and keep what is committed to him. John viii. 18. 'I am one that bear witneſs of myſelf; and 'the Father that ſent me beareth witneſs of 'me.' And though he bear record of himſelf, yet his record is true and credible; for he came from heaven, and was made man in an extraordinary way; and he roſe again after death, and aſcended to heaven; which ſeems to be the meaning of thoſe words, 'For I know whence I came, and whither 'I go;' which are brought as a reaſon of the truth of his teſtimony, John viii. 14. He appeared amongſt men with all the undiſputed ſigns of the Meſſiah upon him; and the doctrines that he preached, and the miracles that he wrought, and the convulſions of nature at his death, and the wonders of his reſurrection, all agree to confirm the miſſion of Chriſt, and his ability to ſave. A Chriſtian beholds the Son of God coming from the dead, with this meſſage to him: "I am able to deliver from death thoſe that "believe in me; to keep their ſouls ſafe in my "hand, and to raiſe their bodies up to life "everlaſting: For, behold, *I was dead, and* "*am alive; and live for evermore.* Amen."

Or ſhall I rather ſay, that the miracles of Chriſt were the *teſtimonies which the Holy Spirit* gave to the miſſion of Chriſt, the Son of God? For they are ſometimes in ſcripture aſcribed

aſcribed to the Spirit, Matt. xii. 28. 'I caſt 'out devils by the Spirit of God.' And one of the three witneſſes in heaven to the goſpel of Chriſt is the Spirit of God, 1 John v. 6, 7. 'It is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, be-'cauſe the Spirit is truth.' That Spirit and power by which he opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame to walk, and the dead to riſe, does effectually atteſt his power to take care of thoſe that are intruſted with him: For theſe wonders were wrought with a deſign to confirm this doctrine; and upon this account Chriſt is ſaid to be *juſtified in or by the Spirit*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. His commiſſion was ſealed, and his authority atteſted by theſe mighty works of the bleſſed Spirit.

Thus the believer has a threefold witneſs from heaven, to give him the knowledge of Chriſt, and to confirm his faith; and this is abundantly ſufficient to juſtify his truſt in Chriſt Jeſus.

But he has many other witneſſes alſo to the ſame truth: He can call all the holy prophets and ſaints ſince the world began, to bring in their witneſs, who told of the power of Chriſt to ſave, in dark ſpeeches, when they lived in this world, and now find themſelves ſafe in his hands in the world of light. A believer can call the noble company of apoſtles, the holy army of martyrs and confeſſors, to atteſt the ſame doctrine; who, through terrible temptations of Satan, and the wrath of

of man; who, through fires and waters, and many deaths, have committed their ſouls to his divine keeping, and found them in ſafety beyond the grave.

The believer can add the teſtimony of all his fellow-ſaints now living, who, by venturing their eternal concerns into the hands of Chriſt, have found ſafety and reſt, ſtrength againſt ſin, and peace of conſcience; divine joy, courage againſt ſufferings, and triumphs in the midſt of dangers. They all with one voice cry out, "Not unto ourſelves, not unto "ourſelves, but to thy name be all the glory; "for thy grace has kept us ſince we commit- "ted ourſelves unto thee; and not one of us "is loſt; and we continue to truſt our all "with thee till the great day; and we are "aſſured of ſafety, though our dangers are "infinite."

You ſee here what a rational and ſolid foundation a Chriſtian has for his knowledge of Chriſt, and his faith in him. It is built upon teſtimonies ſo numerous, ſo credible, and ſo divine; well might the apoſtle ſay, *I know whom I have truſted:* And he becomes a witneſs to us even to the end of the world, to direct ſouls to the ſame refuge. When a ſinner is awakened to ſee his dreadful guilt, and danger for eternity, and is making earneſt enquiry, *What ſhall I do for my ſoul?* Where ſhall I truſt it, that it may be kept ſafe for ever? Let his eye be directed

to

to this able and all-ſufficient Saviour, by ſo long a train of witneſſes, and the Holy Spirit with them, and he can no longer doubt whither to apply himſelf, or to whoſe hands he ſhould betruſt his eternal concerns.

IIdly, *The knowledge that a believer has of Chriſt's ability to ſave, ariſes not only from the witneſs of others, but from his own inward and ſenſible experience.* The apoſtle ſpeaks here not as a young believer, but as one that had known Chriſt long, had long truſted him, and gained daily confirmations of his faith, as was hinted before. Though a ſinner at firſt is drawn to Chriſt by the report that is made of him by others, either by his education, by reading or hearing the word, or by holy conference; yet afterwards he grows up to an eſtabliſhment and aſſurance of faith by the ſweet experience he has had of what Chriſt has done for him; and he ſaith to his miniſter, and to his fellow-chriſtian, and to the apoſtles, and the prophets, as all the neighbours ſaid to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 42. 'Now we believe, not merely 'becauſe of this ſaying; for we have heard 'him ourſelves, and know indeed that this is 'the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.'

I am well ſatisfied that it is from this ſort of knowledge, as well as the former, it is from experience as well as faith, that ſo many ſaints have been able to aſſume the words of my text, and to triumph in the approaches

approaches of death. For though they may have learned the knowledge of Chriſt, and his ability to ſave, and that from their earlieſt youth, by the pious inſtructions of their parents, by the miniſtry of their teachers, and much converſe with the holy ſcriptures, yet they have a more large and confirmed knowledge of Chriſt, from the many ſenſible effects of his love and power upon their ſouls, and from their conſtant converſe with him by meditation and prayer, both in their ſecret retirement, and in their daily walk with God. They can ſay from a ſweet and rich experience, perhaps from their youngeſt years, and downwards, to maturer age, *I know whom I have believed.*

I know my conſcience was burdened with guilt, and I could find no relief till I ſaw the croſs of Chriſt, and carried my guilty conſcience thither; the man that hung upon the tree took my burden off, ſprinkled me with his own blood, and undertook to ſecure me from the wrath of God for ever. I know who it was that relieved me from theſe terrors, and I rejoice in his atonement.

I had no righteouſneſs to appear in before a pure and a holy God, and I had juſt reaſon to dread his preſence as a conſuming fire; but the ſame glorious perſon put a complete righteouſneſs upon me, through faith, whereby I can ſtand before a juſt God, with humble confidence;

confidence; and I know and adore *the Lord my righteouſneſs.*

My nature was all corrupted, my ſins were ſtrong, I had no power to think or to do that which was good; and I know whoſe grace it was that renewed all my nature, that formed my ſoul to religious thoughts, that ſet me upon the work of mortification, and aſſiſted me in thoſe divine labours. I remember what powerful ſeeds of vanity were found in my heart; and if I had not given up the garden to Chriſt's keeping, it had been all overrun with weeds, and neither fruit nor flower had ever appeared there.

When I met with temptations I found myſelf a very unequal match for them; for I was by nature all weakneſs; but by the knowledge of Chriſt I have obtained ſtrength: I have often found *his grace ſufficient for me*, and *his ſtrength made perfect in my infirmity:* I know by whoſe power it is, that I ſtand; and *I am perſuaded that he* that has kept me hitherto, is ſtill *able to ſave me from falling:* I have tried his grace ſo often, and found it ſufficient hitherto, that I will truſt him for what remains. I have committed my ſoul therefore to his keeping till the day of my death, till the great day of my reſurrection. And we who are alive believe concerning thoſe that are gone, that our bleſſed Lord has fulfilled a great part of his truſt; has introduced their ſpirits into the preſence of the Father,

Father, with exceeding joy; and will fulfil the design of his love, when the dead shall arise to complete glory.

Thus I have endeavoured to make it appear, that *a believer knows so much of the person of Christ, of his qualifications for a Saviour, and his divine commission for this purpose, as to engage his trust and confidence in him:* And he obtains this knowledge by *testimonies* of sufficient evidence; and by his *own experience* he confirms his faith. The *Reflections* that attend this subject will compose the next Discourse.

DISCOURSE X.

FAITH built on KNOWLEDGE.

PREACHED 1711.

The Second Part of this SERMON.

2 Tim. i. 12.

——— *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, againſt that day.*

THOUGH the Redeemer was gone to the inviſible world, and St. Paul never knew him while he was on earth, yet he was no ſtranger to him when he wrote this Epiſtle. Chriſt is unſeen to men, but not unknown to the believer. The apoſtle was ſo well acquainted with the perſon and the commiſſion of Chriſt, that he could venture all

all into his hands to the day of judgment; he could look forward to that day with divine pleaſure, and rejoice in the midſt of preſent ſufferings, upon the aſſurance of his future ſafety.

From the example of this great and holy man in my text, I have drawn this Obſervation.

Doct. *A Chriſtian lays a ſolid foundation for his faith and joyful hope in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus, in whom he truſts.*

Here I have ſhewn at large what it is of Chriſt that a Chriſtian is acquainted with, in order to truſt him. Beſides the wondrous conſtitution of this perſon, as a man, in whom dwells the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, many glorious and all-ſufficient qualifications of a Mediator are found in him. Ye have heard how great and how good, how wiſe and how faithful, he is; how well fitted to undertake the ſalvation of the guilty, becauſe he hath provided an atonement and complete righteouſneſs; how well furniſhed to take the charge of bringing ſinners to a ſtate of grace and holineſs, becauſe he hath the fulneſs of the Spirit in him, to communicate to men, in order to renew their natures, and fit them for heaven. I have ſhown what a commiſſion he received from the Father, to undertake the great work of the ſalvation of men; and thereby, as he hath a natural power, ſo he hath a legal authority

to take the charge of ſouls that are committed to him. O the glorious furniture of the great Mediator! O the divine commiſſion that gives ſecurity to faith! How happily are they joined in Jeſus the Lord! And how much doth the knowledge of this conduce to a believer's comfort.

I have alſo ſhown at large, in the ſecond place, how a Chriſtian comes by this knowledge: He has abundant teſtimony to the truth of all theſe things from heaven and from earth: God himſelf hath given witneſs from heaven, by miracles, viſions, and voices: The apoſtles, prophets, and martyrs, have filled the earth with their witneſs; and, by moſt convincing arguments, have proved the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt to ſave. The believer hath a witneſs in his own ſoul, to the power and grace of Chriſt, when he feels holineſs wrought in his heart by the goſpel, and divine peace in his conſcience, with the foretaſtes of heaven.

Now from ſuch a knowledge, derived from ſcripture and inward experience, he grows up to a holy courage in believing; he can venture his immortal concerns with aſſurance into the hands of Chriſt; he is bold, and triumphs in his faith, and can ſuffer for it without being aſhamed.

Thus having briefly recalled the doctrinal part, I proceed now to the laſt thing I propoſed;

poſed; and that was, to attempt ſome uſeful Remarks on this ſubject or Diſcourſe.

Iſt Remark. Here we may learn *the true nature of ſaving faith in Chriſt.* It is a *committing of the ſoul into the hands of Chriſt, from a due knowledge of his perſon, and his power to ſave.* It is true, that my text is not the mere language of a young and feeble faith, but the divine oratory of holy confidence, joy, and triumph; yet the nature of ſaving faith is ſo fully compriſed, and ſo plainly expreſſed in it, that I have often thought I know not any one ſingle verſe in the whole Bible, that gives us ſo clear and diſtinct an account of this grace. By the words of my text it is rendered as intelligible as love, or hope, or fear, or almoſt any of the common actions of life or religion.

It is a committing or betruſting of the ſoul to Chriſt for complete ſalvation, flowing from a ſenſe of our ſin and miſery; a knowledge of his perſonal qualifications, and his divine commiſſion; or a perſuaſion of his ability and willingneſs to keep what is thus committed to him to the day of final judgment.

Saving faith is not a feeble belief of the words, or works, or power of Chriſt, upon a ſhort hearſay and ſlight notice, but it is built upon knowledge and juſt evidence. It is not a mere doctrinal and hiſtorical aſſent to the truths which our Saviour ſpoke; nor

is it a mere rational conviction by the beſt arguments, that Chriſt is furniſhed with ſuch abilities to ſave: It is not a ſudden fit of deſire, or hope, or well-wiſhing to our ſouls to be ſaved by Chriſt; nor is it a raſh and bold preſumption that Chriſt will ſave me, and make me happy: But it is *a ſolemn betruſting of my ſoul into his hands for ſalvation, built upon a deep ſenſe of my own ſin and danger; a ſolid knowledge of his ſufficient furniture for ſuch an undertaking; and an earneſt deſire to be made partaker of this ſalvation, in the full nature of it, both the holineſs and the joy.*

Saving faith therefore ſuppoſes and implies in it *a lively ſenſe of the guilt of our ſins, and the eternal miſery that is like to enſue;* a ſight of the juſt vengeance of God to which we are expoſed, and how uncapable we are to make atonement for ourſelves, or procure pardon; a ſenſe of our want of a perfect righteouſneſs to juſtify us before God, and how impoſſible it is for us to make one out of our own works and duties; for why ſhould we truſt another to do that which we can do for ourſelves.

It ſuppoſes alſo *a ſight of the corruption of our natures, our perpetual tendency to freſh iniquity,* and *our weakneſs to perform the duties of life or religion;* our natural delight in ſin and the creature, and our natural averſion to God, and all that is holy; together with our utter incapacity of enjoying heaven whilſt we

we are in this temper, and our impotence to change our own natures, and turn our ſouls from earth to heaven.

It ſuppoſes and implies *a painful ſenſe of our having offended God, and wearineſs of this ſtate of ſin, and a hearty willingneſs to be delivered from it:* For why ſhould we ſeek after the knowledge of ſuch an almighty Friend and Saviour, if we were not fearful of eternal miſery without one? Or why ſhould we concern ourſelves about a perſon that can ſubdue ſin in us, if we are not ſo far made willing to part with it, as to have our natures reformed into holineſs? And let it be obſerved, that this painful ſenſe, this inward wearineſs of the power and reign of ſin in us, and this deſire of deliverance from it, is the moſt eſſential part of *true repentance*, or the converſion of the ſoul from ſin to God.

It includes, in the next place, *a ſight and belief of the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt to ſupply our wants;* that there is atonement in him for our ſins, and pardon procured by him; that there is righteouſneſs with him for our juſtification and acceptance to eternal life; and all this by the means of his perfect obedience and death: That there is power and grace in him to conquer all our ſins, to ſuppreſs temptations, to reform our vicious appetites, to incline our wills to God, to ſtrengthen our endeavours for the practice of all holineſs; to keep us in the favour and

in the image of God, and conduct us safe to heaven; and that he is appointed by the Father to do all this for sinners.

It consists formally in *a committing of the guilty and sinful soul to the care of Christ*, according to his Father's commission to take care of lost souls, and to keep that which is committed to him. It is a secret address of the heart unto Christ, whereby we resign our guilty persons to him, to be pardoned for the sake of his sufferings; our unrighteous souls to be accepted through his righteousness; our sinful and polluted natures to be sanctified by the power of his grace, and to be preserved safe to death and glory.

After all this, there follows *an acquiescence, or rest of the soul in Christ*, which he promised, when he called the *weary and the heavy-laden* sinners *to come to him*, Matth. xi. 28. And this is accompanied with a good hope and expectation of all this salvation from Christ, for which the sinner trusts in him: And this excites his love and thankfulness to Christ, and awakens all his endeavours to a warm pursuit of heaven in the path of holiness, in which God hath appointed us to walk to the kingdom. Thus every divine promise, every threatening and every command, obtains a due authority over the heart, under the vital influence of such a faith. This is not *a lazy and a slothful confidence*, that casts away all care by throwing it on Christ, and walks in

a ſecure and bold neglect of duty: For a believer well knows that he is bound to take the utmoſt care of his own ſoul, to work out his ſalvation with holy fear, to watch againſt temptation, to reſiſt every riſing ſin, and perſevere to the death; though, from a ſenſe of his own inſufficiency, he builds his ſafety and hope on the all-ſufficiency of Chriſt.

Let it be obſerved here, that it is not neceſſary that all theſe ſeveral workings of the heart ſhould be plain, and diſtinct, and ſenſible, in every act of faith, nor in every true believer: For the actions of the ſoul, and eſpecially the ſprings, and the motives, and deſigns of thoſe actions, are ſo hidden, and ſo mingled with each other, that they are not all diſtinctly perceived even in the ſoul, where they are tranſacted. When the jailor cried out, 'What ſhall I do to be ſaved;' Acts xvi. 30. or when the poor man in the Goſpel, Mark ix. 24. ſaid, 'Lord, I believe; 'help my unbelief;' there were a multitude of crowding thoughts and paſſions that produced and mingled with thoſe ideas and expreſſions of fear and faith, which could never be diſtinctly apprehended and recounted by the perſons that felt them. But this I ſay, that moſt, or all the particulars I have mentioned, ſeem to be neceſſary in the very nature of a true and ſaving faith in Chriſt, where the goſpel is known and preached ſo clearly as it is in our times, and muſt be

pre-ſuppoſed or involved, and ſecretly included, in the very act of believing unto eternal life. It is a committing the ſoul to the care of Chriſt, from ſuch motives, and with ſuch deſigns, as I have deſcribed.

This account of *ſaving faith* guards it againſt all the miſtakes of the age, and ſecures it againſt all the inroads of error on either ſide. A Chriſtian that takes in all theſe views, will not eaſily be led away by the Popiſh, or any other doctrine, where faith is ſuppoſed to be a *mere aſſent to the revelations of the goſpel*, nor will he be inſnared by the unwary expreſſions of ſome great writers, that faith is a *full perſuaſion of our own ſalvation;* which has given too much countenance to Antinomian follies.

He that has this knowledge and this belief which I have deſcribed, and does thus heartily commit his ſoul to Chriſt, ſhall in no wiſe be caſt out, and can never miſcarry; but by repeated exerciſes of this faith, and humble watchfulneſs in walking with God, he ſhall grow rich in experience, and ſhall learn to ſay with triumph, *I know whom I have believed, and am perſuaded that he is able*, &c.

IId Remark. We may infer from this Diſcourſe, *the great value of a ſolid and regular knowledge of the perſon of Chriſt and his goſpel;* It lays a good foundation for our firſt faith, and afterwards for its growth to a ſteady

ſteady aſſurance. When we well *know whom we have believed*, we believe with a firmer confidence, and with boldneſs we commit our infinite concerns into the hands of a perſon of whoſe ability and faithfulneſs we are well perſuaded; at firſt, by a diſtinct knowledge of his goſpel, and afterwards, by an experimental acquaintance with his power and grace. Our hope in his ſalvation is hereby better eſtabliſhed, and our hearts grow fearleſs. Such a hope is an anchor that loſes not its hold in the wildeſt ſtorms, and makes the veſſel ride in ſafety.

What is the reaſon of the perpetual doubts and deſpondencies of ſome Chriſtians, that have made a long profeſſion of the goſpel? Whence is it that they are alarmed at every turn, and tremble, as though all were loſt? How comes it to paſs, that theſe hurries of mind ſhould return ſo often, and almoſt overwhelm ſome pious ſouls, that walk watchfully and humbly with God? Is it not becauſe their faith has been too much built upon ſudden and warm affections, without ſo ſolid a ground of regular knowledge? When perſons of a weaker mind have felt a ſtrong and divine impreſſion from ſome particular ſcripture, or from ſome bright ſentence in a ſermon, which hath diſplayed the grace and ſalvation of Chriſt, they have made this inward ſenſation the ground of their hope; they have fed ſtill upon this cordial, and

lived

lived upon this ſupport. And whenſoever theſe warm impreſſions return, they truſt in Chriſt afreſh, and rejoice ſenſibly in his ſalvation: But they can hardly give a rational account what their faith is, or why they believe; and when theſe extraordinary ſupplies fail them, they ſink, and tremble, and die.

I confeſs, if this faith change their natures, purify their hearts from the love of ſin, and make them walk in holineſs, far be it from me to ſuſpect the truth of it. But this I muſt ſay, that ſuch ſouls are in danger of perpetual diſquietudes, ready to be ſhaken by every wind, and expoſed to every gloomy temptation: When the flaſhes of light are gone, they are all darkneſs and terror, becauſe they cannot render a reaſon of the hope that was in them, from a diſtinct acquaintance with the perſon in whom they had fixed their hope, or from his rich ability to ſave.

It is not a piece of wiſdom in natural things to truſt a man with affairs of importance before we know him; or if we do, every little dark circumſtance, every flying report, will be ready to ſhake our hearts, and fill us with fear; though perhaps our concerns may be ſafe in his hands. And it is not a piece of holy wiſdom to truſt Chriſt himſelf infinitely, and yet be contented to know him but a very little. Such ſouls may be ſafe at laſt, becauſe the Lord, whom they truſt, is honeſt and faithful; but they expoſe themſelves to many fears,

fears, and frequent torments of mind, all the time of their abſence from him. Let Athenians build their altars to the unknown God; but a Chriſtian ſhould not truſt in an unknown Saviour.

Let us all be perſuaded then to learn much of Chriſt, that with honour and wiſdom we may truſt him much; that we may venture our all for eternity into his hands, and reſt ſecurely upon well-known power and faithfulneſs. 'They that know thy name,' O God our Saviour, 'will put their truſt in 'thee,' Pſal. ix. 10. There is a noble inſtance of holy prudence in a well-built and well-ſettled faith. Let us not fancy that we know Chriſt enough, when we have attained merely ſuch a degree of knowledge as is abſolutely neceſſary for converſion, or ſo much as is ſufficient to make a profeſſion of his name, and thereby obtain a right to the fellowſhip of the ſaints. Let us not be content to be always babes, feeble and fearful becauſe unknowing: We ſhould think no pains too much to acquire divine knowledge, and to improve it: And to this end, let the holy ſcriptures be our daily ſtudy, for theſe are the writings that teſtify of Chriſt. Let us not cenſure the preachers that feed us with a word of knowledge, nor complain of dry diſcourſes, when in any particular ſermon, the doctrines of religion are chiefly inſiſted on; for theſe are the foundation of our wiſeſt faith,

faith, and the pillars of ſolid and exalted joy. It was knowledge that carried the great apoſtle into that ecſtaſy of pleaſure, and divine mortification to every thing beſides Chriſt. Phil. iii. 8, 9. 'Yea, doubtleſs, I count all 'things but loſs, for the excellency of the 'knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for 'whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, 'and count them but dung, that I might be 'found in him,' &c.

Seek after experimental acquaintance with Chriſt. Follow the advice of St. Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 18. 'Grow in grace, and in the know-'ledge of our Lord Jeſus.' This is attained by much converſe with him, in meditation and prayer; by ſecret and hourly addreſſes to him; by frequent breathings of ſoul towards our heavenly friend, in whoſe hands lie all our immortal concerns. Make daily obſervations of the work and power of his grace upon your hearts, in your performance of duties, and ſucceſs againſt temptations; and *have a care that you loſe not the things which ye had wrought:* Take heed leſt you decline in your acquaintance with Chriſt; that your faith and hope being built upon a regular knowledge, you may have a bleſſed treaſure of Chriſtian experiences to eſtabliſh and exalt it.

IIId Remark. *How unkind and unnatural is it for parents to let the ſouls of their children periſh for want of knowledge! How neceſſary to*

to acquaint them betimes with the gospel of Christ, that they may trust in him betimes, and that their souls may be safe in the great day! If I should ask every mother in the assembly this question, Do you not desire all your children should be young believers? But how can they believe in him whom they have not known? How can you expect they should trust in any person, if you have never brought them into his acquaintance? Or will you content yourselves that you give them the name of Christians in baptism, and let them know nothing of Christ?

Think it not enough therefore to make them repeat the words of a Catechism, but enquire what they mean by such and such words and sentences, which they pronounce; and thus you will discover where their ignorance lies: Then inform them, and assist their young understandings. Acquaint them with the sin of their natures, with the sins of their life, with the anger of God, and danger of hell; till they are afraid of it in earnest, and ask, *What they shall do to be saved?* Then teach them the knowledge of Christ, in his glorious person; in his excellent qualifications of love, power, and faithfulness; teach them the doctrine of his death as a satisfaction for sin, and of that all-sufficient righteousness, upon which only they can find acceptance with a just and a holy God: Acquaint them with his pleading in heaven as a Priest, for sinners

ſinners here on earth, and his reigning there as King, to give grace and holineſs, pardon and repentance, and ſalvation, to all that are willing to accept it in his own way. And let this practice be continually repeated, till, by frequent enquiries, you find they underſtand what you teach them.

Show them how to commit their ſouls into the hands of Chriſt by prayer and faith, and how to walk watchfully in obedience to all the commands of Chriſt, to practiſe the duties of religion toward God, and the duties of morality toward men; in order to evidence their faith, and to bring them onward to complete ſalvation. Tell them of the laſt great judgment-day, when all their ſecret actions ſhall be brought to light before God, angels, and men; and when they muſt give an account to Jeſus the Judge, of all their behaviour here. Make it evident, that there is no way to appear with ſafety before him as a Judge, but by committing their ſouls to him, as their kind and all-ſufficient friend: And then holy parents may hope to meet their ſons and their daughters with comfort, at the right hand of the Lord in that day.

It is an acquaintance with ſuch a Saviour, and ſuch a truſt in him, that will prepare them not only for the laſt judgment, but for every circumſtance of life, and the various changes they may paſs through in the day of their

their pilgrimage; and it will ſit them for an early or an aged death.

If they ſhould be exalted to riches or honour in the world, ſuch a faith will be of abundant uſe and ſafety to them, that the keeping of their ſouls was committed in their younger days to the care of Chriſt; and they will carry their profeſſion and their converſation unſpotted with the world, through ten thouſand ſnares attending ſuch circumſtances, by the influence of ſuch a faith.

If they fall under various and heavy afflictions in the ſeveral ſtages of their life, it will be their perpetual relief, that all their concerns are in the hands of a merciful and a faithful High-Prieſt, who himſelf has ſuffered in the fleſh, and knows how to pity them that ſuffer. When the tumults of ſorrow gather together, and the waves riſe high, to diſtract and overwhelm their ſpirits, they will find many an hour of ſweet ſerenity and calmneſs, by having committed themſelves to that Jeſus, who can ſay to the waves, *Peace, and be ſtill.*

But this leads me to the next Inference.

IVth Remark. We may infer from this Diſcourſe, *How well God has provided for the ſafety and comfort of believers.* For their *ſafety*, becauſe he has ſet up and appointed a perſon ſo able to take care of their ſouls; and for their comfort, becauſe he gives them ſuch

a knowledge of him in his own word, and by their own ſpiritual obſervation. It is this knowledge, this faith, and holy confidence, in the power and faithfulneſs of Chriſt, that prepares the ſoul for all accidents in the natural and ſpiritual life; it is this gives the Chriſtian his ſupport and comfort under every change of circumſtances; and makes him valiant, and ready to meet them all.

Shall we run through a few of theſe ſeaſons briefly?

In times of abounding error, when the goſpel of Chriſt is corrupted, the believer *gives diligence to reading*, that he may *hold faſt the form of ſound words;* he prays for the enlightening Spirit to confirm him in the truth; but he rejoices in this, that his ſoul is in the hands of Chriſt, who will not ſuffer him to be ſeduced into damnable hereſies, but will ſecure him from every fatal miſtake.

Under the violent temptations of Satan, it is a ſupport to the ſaint, that the powers of hell are all led captive, and trodden under foot by him who is the Guardian of his eternal welfare: He knows that his Lord will *ſave* him from *the mouth of the lion;* will *deliver him from every evil work;* and will *preſerve him to his heavenly kingdom*, 2 Tim. iv. 17.

Under a ſenſe of freſh guilt, and *ſins of daily infirmity*, the Chriſtian mourns bitterly becauſe of his failings and follies, but hopes for ſecurity from ruining tranſgreſſions, and the

the unpardonable sin; because the virtue of the atonement in which he trusts is eternal: Christ has undertaken to preserve him from final apostasies, though the best of saints are not secured here from the workings of sin.

And *under these discomposures of mind, and the frequent vexations and uneasinesses in the things of this life*, that may ruffle their tempers, had it not been for their acquaintance with Christ, they had been sometimes utterly overcome; but how often have they retired into their closets, and left the tumult of their thoughts behind them in the world, while they went to converse with him by prayer, who had the care of their spiritual concerns? Or, at least, they have cried unto the Lord because of those uneasy companions; have shook them off in his presence with holy anger, and returned into the world again with serenity in their countenance, and victory and peace in their souls. This strength they derive from their blessed Lord, whom they have chosen for their divine Guardian.

Under the weakness of our graces, and the inconstancy of our tempers, it is a matter of relief to an humble saint, that the keeper of his soul is compassionate, and pities his frailties; is almighty, and will strengthen him under his weaknesses; is unchangeable, *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* The lambs of his flock are weak, and cannot follow him in some rugged and difficult paths;

then he *gathers the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom*, Isa. xl. 11. And there are some of the sheep of his fold that are ready to straggle into forbidden ways, to wander abroad, and lose themselves in the wilderness: But the *Lord is their Shepherd, he restoreth their souls*, and *leads them again into the way of righteousness, for his name's sake*, Psal. xxiii. 3.

In an hour of desertion, when God has withdrawn his joys, when the light of his countenance is concealed, and darkness lies upon the spirit, the believer holds fast his hope, though his rejoicings are interrupted; for he has committed his soul to the care of Christ, who has full interest with the Father, and can prevail for the recovery of his joys again. While *he walks in darkness, and has no light* of comfort, still he can *trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God*, Isa. l. 10.

Under sickness, and pains of nature, that threaten a dissolution of the body, the pillow of a believer lies easy under his head; for his soul, his dearest part, is in safe keeping, and cannot perish. Amidst all the languishings of nature, we have often heard the triumphs of grace from the mouth of a lively Christian. " *If I walk through the valley of* " *the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for* " my Almighty Friend *is with me*, Psal. xxiii. " 4. *I know that if the tabernacle of this* " *earthly house be dissolved, I have a building of*

" *of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal*
" *in the heavens.* There is a manſion above
" prepared for me by him, who has the care
" of my eternity. He went up on high, on
" purpoſe *to prepare a place, and he will come*
" *again, and take* me *to himſelf; that where*
" he *is, there* I *may be alſo; if it were not ſo,*
" he *would have told* me; for *I know whom*
" *I have truſted;* and *whither* he is gone *I*
" *know, and the way I know,* 2 Cor. v. 1.
" John xiv. 2, 3, 4."

Upon this view and aſſurance, the dying ſaint attempts the praiſes of his Lord, and practiſes ſomething like the worſhip of heaven before-hand: *To him that is able to keep me from falling, and will preſent me faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy, be glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever.* Amen. Jude 24, 25.

Vth Remark. See *whence ariſeth the divine and amazing courage that ſome Chriſtians have expreſſed under the fouleſt reproaches and ſharpeſt ſufferings for the ſake of the goſpel.* This holy fortitude ſprings from a good acquaintance with the perſon of Chriſt, and a full perſuaſion of his ability to ſave. When we are ignorant, and in the dark, we are afraid of every thing, but courage is the effect of light and knowledge. A faith that is well-founded on a due knowledge of Chriſt, can raiſe the ſuffering Chriſtian above the

power of ſhame and fear. And I chuſe to make this Remark a diſtinct Head of diſcourſe, becauſe it is the very occaſion on which the apoſtle introduces the words of my text. *Chriſt has aboliſhed death*, ver. 10. *He has brought life and immortality to light by the goſpel:* This I am well acquainted with, ſaith the apoſtle; for this very perſon, even Chriſt, my Lord *has appointed me a preacher* of this doctrine: *For which cauſe I alſo ſuffer.——Nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed: For I know whom I have believed; and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day.*

It is a point of folly for a man to expoſe himſelf to reproach, and pain, and death, without any ſolid reaſon, or juſt hope of recompenſe. But St. Paul was no fool, when he was ready to be bound and die for the name of Chriſt; for he looked forward to the laſt great day, he ſaw his immortal intereſt ſafe under the care of Chriſt, whom he had well known and truſted; and therefore he had good reaſon to venture all on earth for the ſake of ſuch a friend in heaven. He ſaw the recompenſe ſecure in the hands of Chriſt; and therefore, (ſays he) " *I am* " *not aſhamed of* my ſufferings, nor of my " faith. Let my perſecutors deſtroy this " fleſh, but they cannot touch my ſoul; for " it is in ſafe hands: I know where I have " truſted it. Let the Jews or the Romans " kill

" kill this body, but it ſhall be raiſed up
" again at the great day, by his power, to
" whom I have committed my all for *here*
" and for *hereafter;* for he is able to expel
" death from his poſſeſſions, and make the
" grave reſtore all its priſoners. I know his
" power to ſubdue all things to himſelf. Let
" them load me with ſhame and reproaches
" now, but I ſhall look them in the face in
" that day with courage; and they ſhall
" tremble, and be confounded with everlaſt-
" ing ſhame. They may deprive me of a
" mortal life, and all that belongs to it; but
" they cannot rob me of a bleſſed immorta-
" lity; for the Lord of life hath taken charge
" of that important concern; and I am aſ-
" ſured he is able to keep it. None can pluck
" me out of his hand: He will preſent me
" ſafe before his Father in that day, and
" make it appear with divine evidence, that
" the *light afflictions which I ſuffer* now *are*
" *not worthy to be compared with the glory*
" *that is* then to be *revealed.* He puts me
" into the ſame promiſe with himſelf; *If I*
" *ſuffer with him, I ſhall alſo reign with him:*
" And his promiſes are an eternal ſecurity.
" *I know whom I have believed.*" Thus you
ſee what a glorious encouragement may be
aſſumed from ſuch an acquaintance with
Chriſt, to endure the croſs, and deſpiſe the
ſhame, for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel.

I grant there have been weak Christians of lower degrees of knowledge, that have borne sufferings and martyrdom with a courage beyond all expectation. There have been some babes in Christ, that could not dispute for the truth, yet they could die for it. But let it be noted, that such persons have had generally but small advantage for improvement in knowledge; either they were young converts, or had but mean natural parts, or a poor education; yet a sincere zeal for their Lord: And perhaps also they had a bright and strong experimental knowledge of the gospel, by its sweet and sanctifying influences. Now when such as these have been called out by providence to bear a testimony to the truth, they have had *a mouth and wisdom given them immediately* from heaven, *which all their adversaries have not been able to gainsay, nor resist:* And this, according to the promise made to the apostles, in their infancy of understanding, Luke xxi. 15. They have been upheld under their torments by the arms of Christ, and by his sensible presence: Their divine fortitude hath been all inspiration. But you that have fair and daily opportunities for a large acquaintance with the gospel, have no reason to expect such miracles for your assistance in our day, if ye refuse the appointed means of hearing, reading, and meditation.

Take

Take this further advice alſo along with you: *While you are treaſuring up truth, ſeek after holineſs, and every grace.* See to it, that all the knowledge you gain by theſe methods be wrought into your very ſouls, and that you experience the ſanctifying and comforting power of theſe truths on your conſciences, your paſſions, and your lives. Divine truth, thus turned into ſpiritual nouriſhment, gives a vital ſtrength for ſervice and ſuffering. When you have the *word of God* in your mouths, as the *ſword of the Spirit*, Eph. vi. 14, &c. the *breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs* to cover your hearts, *the hope of ſalvation as a helmet* on your heads, and *the ſhield of faith* to ward off every dart; you are then beſt furniſhed to reſiſt unto death.

But I would here chide the ignorant and the lazy Chriſtian. What will you do when ye ſhall be aſſaulted with the witty reproaches of the Heathens of our age, thoſe apoſtates from Chriſtianity? When they ſhall laugh at you for a fool, becauſe you profeſs to be a believer, and they think they have reaſon to laugh, if you can give no reaſon why you believe? What will you ſay, when they ſhall tell you the goſpel of Chriſt is but a fable, and endeavour to ſcoff you out of your faith? When they ſhall ridicule you for paying the honours of a God to a poor man, that was hanged upon a tree in Jeruſalem, and hath been dead and buried ſeventeen hundred years

ago? What will you ſay, when they ſhall aſk you, how you can imagine that this man was the Son of God? Or the ſcriptures are of divine original? Will you anſwer as a Papiſt does, "I believe it becauſe the church believes it?" Or will you reply with the Turk, "I believe in Chriſt (as the Turk doth in "Mahomet) becauſe the whole nation believes?" Or will you give the anſwer of a child, "I believe the Bible is the word of "God, becauſe my mother told me ſo?" But how unworthy is this of a perſon that profeſſes to be a Chriſtian, and is grown to full years of maturity? How ridiculous is it for a man to believe, and he knows not why? A man that hath had a thouſand advantages to get his faith well-grounded, and to learn the reaſon of the hope that is in him?

Beſides, How will you be able to ſtand in ſuch an hour of temptation? Perhaps you will loſe your faith, and all your religion. A bold jeſt, or a fair ſhew of argument, may make ſo deep an impreſſion on a weak and unfurniſhed mind, as to give a ſudden inlet to the tempter; and your ſoul may be filled with doubts and ſuſpicions of Chriſtianity: Then from one degree of unbelief you may be led on to another, till you have *made ſhipwreck of the faith and a good conſcience too.* Thus you will part with all your hopes of immortality and heaven, for want of a well-grounded knowledge of the perſon in whom you profeſs to truſt.

But

But further; if perſecution ſhould grow ſharp, and days of torment and martyrdom return again, how would you be able to reſiſt unto blood, and to bear the fiery trial, for the ſake of a Saviour that you have not much acquaintance with? How could you hold out in this conflict till the death, if you have but little knowledge and little experience of that goſpel which promiſeth a crown of life? Would ſuch ignorance as your's is endure to be plundered and baniſhed? To be ſcourged and buffeted? To be faſtened to the chains of a galley-ſlave, or to die by lingering tortures? Do you think you could bear what our neighbours and brethren in France have endured upon the account of your faith, and yet have no better reaſon to give for it? You will make but a poor confeſſor or martyr, if you can ſay no more for Chriſtianity than an Heathen can ſay for his national religion? If you have no more to plead in defence of the bleſſed Jeſus, than a native of Morocco hath for his prophet Mahomet; a man of Epheſus for his goddeſs Diana; or a citizen of Athens for his *unknown God*.

Attend therefore to the advice of the apoſtle Peter, 1ſt epiſtle, 3d chapter, ver. 14, 15. 'But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, 'happy are ye; and be not afraid of their 'terror, neither be troubled; but be ready 'always to give an anſwer to every man that 'aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in 'you

'you with meekneſs and fear:' And again I would put you in mind how he concludes his ſecond epiſtle, and what direction he gives even to thoſe who had ſome good knowledge of Chriſtianity; that you may be ſecured from the growing apoſtaſy of the age. Ver. 17, 18. 'Ye, therefore, beloved, ſeeing 'ye know theſe things before, beware leſt ye 'alſo being led away with the error of the 'wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs: 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge 'of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.'

VIth Remark. *This doctrine relieves our ſorrows at the death of our pious relatives*; for we know to whom they had intruſted their ſouls.* We are in no pain or jealouſy about their eternal ſtate; for when they leave us and this world, they have parted indeed with their friends on earth, but it is to dwell with a better friend: For this is the deſign of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of his powerful prayer, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that thoſe 'whom thou haſt given me be with me 'where I am, to behold my glory.'

And we ſhould learn for the ſame reaſon to be well pleaſed with the time when Chriſt calls up to heaven thoſe ſouls that he has taken care of; for he knows the propereſt hour,

* This Sermon was firſt preached on occaſion of the death of a worthy member of our congregation.

hour, when to diſmiſs them from fleſh into the inviſible world.

If they are declining in their religion, and beginning to wander away from God, we may be ready to ſay, "O that they may "live till they are fully recovered again to "the brightneſs of their former profeſſion!" But Chriſt, who hath the care of them, calls them now, leſt they run further away, and fall into groſſer ſins; he hides them from temptations in the ſilent grave, and ſeizes their ſouls to himſelf in the wiſeſt and kindeſt moment.

If they grow more holy, more delightful, and more lovely to all their friends, we are ready to ſay, "Now let them live long, to "bring more glory to God, to pleaſe, en-"tertain, and profit us." But the voice of Chriſt, to whom they had committed their ſouls, may ſay, "Now let them die, and quit "the world with the faireſt honour, that they "may leave behind, amongſt their friends "and the churches, the ſweeteſt ſavour of all "their converſation, and the moſt precious "memory of their names."

Are they taken away by ſudden death? They know him who has the keys of death, and they have committed the care of it to him, to determine the time and the manner, when and how they ſhould be releaſed from this priſon of fleſh, and be taken up to his own boſom. Though they may be conveyed with

with a ſort of ſurpriſe into the unſeen world, yet it is but a ſeizure into the arms of their beſt Beloved, who is ready to receive and conduct them to the Father in perfect righteouſneſs, with abounding joy.

Laſt Remark. *This doctrine leads us on to a joyful and entertaining proſpect of the great and laſt day;* the day when Chriſt ſhall make his faithfulneſs appear in all the truſts that he ever undertook; for then he ſhall have fulfilled them all, and ſhall deliver up his account to the Father. Then millions of ſouls, that were committed to his care in ſucceſſive ages, and human bodies, an equal number, that had long lain ſleeping in the grave under his eye, ſhall be re-united, to make complete and glorious perſons; then ſhall all his ſaints at once appear, and give honour and everlaſting thanks to their faithful and almighty Guardian.

Behold, he comes with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him! He comes *in his own glory, in the glory of his Father, and with all his holy angels!* Behold, he comes exalted upon a throne of judgment, where the Father hath placed him to finiſh his great commiſſion, and to paſs a deciſive ſentence upon all mankind. My faith deſcries him afar off; I ſee his day, and I rejoice to ſee it. He ſhall ſummon all the nations before him; and I ſhall appear there, I truſt, at his right hand, among

among the bleſſed. Then ſhall he remember and fulfil all the kind words that he hath ſpoken to me on earth, by his holy writings: For in the days of my infirmity and warfare on earth, *I have not been aſhamed of him before men, nor will he be aſhamed of me before his Father, and his holy angels*, Matt. x. 32.

" See, O Father, will the Lord Jeſus ſay, " *See, here am I, and the children that thou* " *haſt given me*, Heb. ii. 13. *While they were* " *in the world I kept them, through thy name:* " *Behold, there is not one of them loſt*, John " xvii. 12.

" Come," will the Lord ſay to every humble believer, " come to my right hand, and " ſtand there among the ſaints: Behold, all " is ſafe that thou didſt once intruſt to my " keeping: I know thy faith; I acknowledge " thy love; I will now reward all thy hum- " ble obedience with everlaſting honours; " and thou ſhalt confeſs I have been a kind " and a faithful Friend."

God the Father ſhall ſay to our Lord Jeſus, " Well done, my beſt of ſervants, my Son, " my Firſt-beloved; thou haſt kept all thoſe " whom I gave thee to keep, and brought " them ſafe into my preſence; they ſhall be " thy glory, and thy eternal crown." And every ſaint ſhall, as it were, echo to the voice of the Father, and ſay, " My Firſt-beloved, " my Lord, and my beſt of friends, thou haſt " kept me through all the days of my infir-

" mity

" mity and flesh, ever since I gave myself
" up to thy keeping; and thou hast brought
" me safe to thy Father's house; the glory
" and the crown be thine for ever!"

O the unknown transports of this hour! The unspeakable joy and glory of this day! Faith is even astonished at the delightful distant prospect, and longs till the Lord appear.

DISCOURSE XI.

The Ordinary Witneſs of the Spirit.

The Firſt Part of this SERMON.

Rom. viii. 16.

The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.

HERE is a ſacred honour and dignity conferred upon men by a patent from heaven: The *patent* is the ſcripture, or word of God, and the *dignity* is, that we are made his children. Here are alſo two diſtinct *witneſſes* to this title of honour; (*viz.*) our own ſpirits, and the bleſſed Spirit of God: *The Spirit itſelf witneſſes with our ſpirits, that we are the children* of the Moſt High.

Every one that reads the text may plainly diſcern, that, by *the Spirit itſelf*, we muſt underſtand the Holy Ghoſt, or third perſon in the ever bleſſed Trinity, who is ſent to dwell and

and operate in the hearts of Chriſtians; as it is expreſſed in ſeveral of the foregoing verſes. And it is as manifeſt, that *our own ſpirit* here ſignifies that principle within us, diſtinct from our fleſh, whereby we are enabled to think, reaſon, compare things together, and to judge concerning them. This is ſometimes called the *mind*, the *heart*, the *conſcience*, the *ſoul;* and it is termed *our ſpirit* here in the words before us.

The Spirit of God may ſometimes operate by himſelf alone, in a very extraordinary manner, upon the ſouls of men, and give them immediate and divine aſſurances of their adoption and their intereſt in the love of God, as his children: And this favour was ſometimes beſtowed in the primitive days of Chriſtianity, when the ſaints were called in an uncommon manner, to undertake ſervices of uncommon difficulty. But the words of my text ſeem rather chiefly to refer to that more *ordinary* and *uſual teſtimony* which the Spirit of God gives to our ſonſhip, by aſſiſting our own ſpirits to attain the knowledge of this privilege.

In order to improve theſe words, I ſhall endeavour

Iſt, To lead your thoughts on in a few Propoſitions, toward a plain and eaſy notion of this ordinary or aſſiſting witneſs of the Spirit of God.

IIdly,

IIdly, Shew what methods the Holy Spirit generally takes in this work.

IIIdly, Propoſe ſome advices concerning it. And then

IVthly, I ſhall give my thoughts alſo concerning the *extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit.*

Firſt, I would open the way toward a *plain and eaſy notion of this ordinary or aſſiſting witneſs of the Spirit of God with our own ſpirits*, in a few Propoſitions.

I. Prop. *God, in his word, has given us the deſcription and the characters of his children.* This is evident, and beyond diſpute. Many ſcriptures there are that evince it. He has told us what we are by nature; (*viz.*) *Children of wrath;* and laid down the character of ſinful man in an unregenerate ſtate, who are called the *children of the devil.* He has acquainted us with what we are by grace; (*viz.*) *His own children, born again,* or *born of God;* and has laid down various marks of that privilege alſo, that ſo we might diſtinguiſh between good and evil, between ſaints and ſinners.

The *marks of the children of God* in ſcripture, are chiefly ſuch as theſe.

1. They believe in Chriſt Jeſus. John i. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God; even to as many as believed in his name.* 1 John v. 1.

You have the ſame thing expreſſed in other words: *Whoſoever believes that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God:* Whoſoever ſo believes him to be the Meſſiah, as to receive him for a Saviour from ſin and hell, according to his commiſſion to ſave.

2. They are ſuch as do not willingly indulge ſin, that do not make ſin their practice. See 1 John iii. 9. *He that is born of God ſinneth not:* He doth not drink in iniquity with greedineſs, as others do; he has ſtill a ſettled rooted averſion in his mind, to thoſe ſinful practices into which ſometimes he is drawn by the power or ſurpriſe of temptation; *for he has the ſeed of God abiding in him*, and the divine likeneſs and temper communicated to him by regeneration, ſo that he ſins not with a full bent of ſoul, nor with his whole heart, as he loves God, and ſeeks him, nor with conſtancy and perſeverance, Pſal. cxix. 2, 10, 38, 44.

3. *Such as love God, and keep his commandments*, they are the children of God: And this you have frequently repeated in the 1ſt epiſtle of John. When a principle of divine love reigns in the heart, we keep the commands of our heavenly Father with delight, and they are not an heavy taſk or burden to us: *His commandments are not grievous*, 1 John v. 3.

4. Juſtice and charity toward men, and ſpecial affection toward our fellow-chriſtians,

ans, are further evidences of our adoption. 1 John iii. 10. *In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil: Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* When our righteous and friendly conduct toward our fellow-creatures proceeds from a ſenſe of the authority of God, and his divine compaſſion; when our meekneſs, gentleneſs, goodneſs to to all men, and our peculiar love to the ſaints of God, ſpring from a right principle; when we love the brethren becauſe they carry the image of God in them; theſe are ſuch characters as diſtinguiſh the ſons of God from the children of wrath, and the ſeed of the wicked one.

5. Peace-makers are entitled to this dignity: Matt. v. 9. *Bleſſed are the peace-makers, for they ſhall be called the children of God:* But he that ſows diſcord among brethren is of the ſeed of the ſerpent.

6. Sanctified afflictions, and patience under them, is another mark of adoption. Heb. xii. 7. *If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with ſons;* and he does this *for our profit*, ver. 10. *that we might be partakers of his holineſs.* If the ſorrows, the burdens, the reproaches, the pains, the ſickneſſes, and the ſufferings that we ſuſtain, either from the hands of God or men, do not draw out our angry diſquieting paſſions, but are borne with a holy compoſure of ſpirit, looking to the

hand of God as our Father; and if we find our hearts weaned from this life as to a ſtate of ſin and ſorrow, and drawn nearer to heaven, it is a comfortable ſign that we belong to the family of God.

7. They that gain a victory over the world, and live above the reach of the frowns and the ſmiles of it, they are the children of God too: The apoſtle John aſſures us of this, 1 John v. 4. *He that is born of God overcometh the world.*

8. They are the children of God that walk as Chriſt walked, and live as Chriſt lived: They that follow the glorious example of the original and firſt-begotten Son, have the mark of true children. Rom. viii. 29. *God has predeſtinated all* his children *to be conformed to the image of his Son Chriſt Jeſus.*

I might ſum up all the foregoing evidences of ſonſhip in this general character of likeneſs and conformity to our Redeemer: For if we conſult that text, 1 John v. 6. we ſhall find that *the water and blood* are the two great teſtimonies that are given to the *Sonſhip of our Lord Jeſus. This is he that came by water and by blood.* And as he was manifeſted to be the *Son of God* by the purity of his life, and the blood of martyrdom, which alſo was a blood of atonement, ſo are we manifeſted to be the children of God. The *blood* is our *witneſs*, when we by faith lay hold of the atoning blood of Jeſus, and commit

commit our guilty ſouls to pardoning mercy, to be accepted through that blood of his ſacrifice. And when we are ſprinkled with the clean water of ſanctification, or baptized with the *Holy Spirit* and made holy, as Jeſus is holy, then we have *the witneſs of the water* too. Thus, by the witneſs of the *water* and the *blood*, Jeſus the firſt Son is evidenced, and we alſo appear to be children.

II. Prop. As the word of God diſcovers to us, and deſcribes the characters of his children, ſo the *Spirit of God works theſe heavenly diſpoſitions in us, theſe happy characters of our ſonſhip.* By nature we are the *children of wrath*, the mere ſeed of the firſt Adam, and the offspring of Satan, rather than of God; in our corrupt natural ſtate, we are *led by the prince of the power of the air;* we are *children of diſobedience*, and of death, Eph. ii. 2. There are none of theſe divine marks upon us. It is the bleſſed Spirit that forms theſe filial graces in our ſouls, lays the foundation of theſe evidences in the heart with power, and makes them appear in the life with beauty and praiſe. Therefore the *children of God* are ſaid to be *born of the Spirit*, John iii. 5, 6.

It is he that takes us out of the kingdom of Satan, the family of death and hell, and brings us into the family of God, and the kingdom of his grace. It is he that, by his divine influences, tranſlates us from darkneſs

into the kingdom of Chriſt. It is he that takes away all the wild and ſavage marks of an unclean beaſt from the ſoul, and gives it the diſpoſition and the character of the ſheep of Jeſus. It is the bleſſed Spirit who, by his ſanctifying and renewing work, ſtamps the image of God on the ſoul, forms the features and reſemblance of the divine nature, and imprints on the heart ſuch gracious habits and diſpoſitions as render it like to God. Thus the child of God bears the Father's likeneſs, as the figures engraved on the ſeal are copied out on the wax. And this ſome have called the *ſeal of the Holy Spirit*, Eph. i. 13. and iv. 30.

And as the Spirit of God works theſe divine principles of holineſs in the heart, ſo he is ſaid to be *given to us*, *to dwell in us*; *i. e.* to preſerve thoſe holy principles which belong to the children and heirs of God: And in this ſenſe he may be called *an earneſt of their* future *inheritance*, Eph. i. 14.

Bleſſed are your ſouls, who have the forementioned characters impreſſed upon you. Rejoice in your own happy ſtate, and bleſs the Eternal Spirit, who has ſtamped the likeneſs of God upon you; who has *begotten you again* to a new life, by the power of the word working effectually upon your hearts; who has tranſlated you from the houſehold of ſin and Satan, and made you the *children* of the *moſt high God.*

Here

Here alſo we may remark, that in this we bear a reſemblance to Chriſt Jeſus, the only begotten Son. It was by the deſcent of this Spirit on the bleſſed Virgin, and by the *overſhadowing power of the Moſt High*, that the *child Jeſus* was formed; *and therefore, that holy thing which was born of* the Virgin, *was called the Son of God*, Luke i. 35.

The reſemblance holds yet farther: For the *Spirit* was given to *dwell in Chriſt without meaſure*, to ſanctify his human nature, and to work miracles, John iii. 34. By this *Spirit of holineſs* he was alſo *raiſed from the dead;* and thus he was *declared to be the Son of God with power*, as ſome interpret that text, Rom. i. 5. He was God's Firſt-born, before all worlds; and it is the ſame Spirit that dwells in him, the original Son, *without meaſure*, that is ſent, according to our meaſure, to dwell in us alſo: It is the ſame Spirit that raiſes us from a death in treſpaſſes and ſins to a new life: It is the ſame Spirit that is given to ſanctify us, and to make us children.

Go on yet, and compare Rom. viii. 9, 11, 14. with Heb. ii. 14. and you will find, as he was pleaſed in a way of condeſcenſion to take fleſh and blood upon him, *becauſe the children were partakers of fleſh and blood, that he might be like them:* Heb. ii. So he is pleaſed to give his own *Spirit* to men, that they might be like him alſo: For *he that has not the Spirit of Chriſt is none of his*, Rom. viii.

For this reaſon he is not aſhamed to call them brethren, children of one Father; for he partook of their fleſh, and they partake of his Spirit.

III. Prop. *God has given to each of our ſpirits a power of reflecting upon our own hearts and lives, whereby we become witneſſes and judges for or againſt ourſelves:* And by this power we paſs a judgment both concerning our *particular actions*, concerning the *temper of our ſpirits*, and concerning our *ſtate toward God.*

This power is ſometimes called *conſcience.* It is a faculty whereby we compare our words, our thoughts, and actions, with ſome rule; and that rule is the law of God: And hereby we judge concerning theſe *particular thoughts, words, and actions*, whether they are good or bad. But when we compare the *habitual frame and temper* of our ſpirits, as well as the *tranſactions* and *conduct* of our lives, with the plain deſcription and characters of the children of God, that are given us in his word; hereby we judge of our own ſtate, whether it be a *ſtate of ſin*, or a *ſtate of grace.*

This is that light that God has ſet up in men, by which they ſhould paſs ſentence in their own caſe, with regard to their own preſent conduct, and their future hopes. And Solomon, for this reaſon, calls the *ſpirit of man*

man the candle of the Lord, Prov. xx. 27. The Heathens had this conſcience in them, and thoſe broken pieces of the *law that were written in their hearts*, was the rule by which *their conſciences* did *either excuſe or elſe accuſe*, Rom. ii. 15. But we have a more certain rule to judge ourſelves by, even the *word of God*, the revelation of his mind and will, that he has made in the Bible. Our conſciences muſt judge according to this rule. We are bid therefore to *try*, *to judge*, *to examine ourſelves*. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine and prove yourſelves*. And 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a man examine himſelf*. This ſelf-examination is required as a neceſſary duty, in order to come at the knowledge of our ſonſhip, that *our ſpirits* may be able to *bear a witneſs*, *that we are the children of God*.

Bleſſed are they who, upon ſuch an inward ſearch and examination of themſelves, can find ſuch marks of his children. Bleſſed are we, *if our own hearts condemn us not: Then we may aſſure our hearts before* Jeſus our Judge, *and have confidence at his coming*, 1 John iii. 19. Happy is our ſtate, if our ſpirits bear witneſs that we are the children of God, by this inward and impartial reflection upon ourſelves, and the compariſon of our hearts with this rule of judgment.

IV. Prop. Though God has given us this power of reflecting and comparing ourſelves with

with characters laid down in his word, yet *there is need of the aſſiſting light of his Spirit to ſearch with our ſpirits, and to witneſs to his own work in our hearts.*

We are too often ready to deceive ourſelves in this matter two ways: (1.) In ſome perſons *pride and ſelf-flattery* are ſo prevalent, that they always think better of themſelves than they deſerve, and are ready to pronounce themſelves *the children of God*, without juſt evidence and ſufficient ground. (2.) Others, who are humble and ſincere Chriſtians, have their ſpirits ſo depreſſed, either by a *melancholy conſtitution*, by a *natural ſelf-diffidence*, by *weakneſs of body*, or by *heavy afflictions*, that they can ſee nothing good in themſelves; they cannot read any characters of divine grace in their hearts, though grace ſhines viſibly in their whole converſation, to the view of their fellow-chriſtians.

On theſe accounts, and ſome others alſo, we ſtand in need of divine aſſiſtance in this work of *ſelf-examination.* And therefore it is, that though we are commanded to ſearch ourſelves, yet we have the examples of ſaints in the ſcripture, that deſire the Spirit of God to ſearch them too. With what zeal and fervency doth holy David intreat that God would *ſearch him.* See Pſalm cxxxix. 23, 24. when he had been examining his own heart in the two former verſes, he concludes, *Search me, O Lord, and try me.* As we cannot

not work grace in our own hearts, ſo in an hour of darkneſs, we cannot clearly diſcover that grace that is there, to the full ſatisfaction of our conſciences, unleſs the ſame Spirit that wrought it is pleaſed to reveal it to us by his aſſiſting influences. It is by obſervations and aſſiſtances borrowed from the ſun, that *hour-lines* are drawn on a *ſun-dial*, and they abide there in the dark; but we cannot find what hour of the day it is, unleſs the ſun ſhines upon thoſe hour-lines: So grace in the heart is wrought by the Holy Spirit, and it abides ſtill even in the darkeſt night of temptation, when once the Spirit of God has wrought it there, it ſhall never be quite loſt; for *the ſeed of God remains:* but the ſoul cannot diſcern it clearly, ſo as to take comfort from it in an hour of darkneſs; unleſs the Spirit, like the ſun, dart his beams of light into the ſoul, and diſcover his own work. Therefore, a great writer of practical divinity, Mr. R. Allein, expreſſes it, "As the Spirit ſeals us, by be-"ing the mark of the Lord upon us, ſo he "witneſſes, by being the light of the Lord "within us, whereby we come to diſcern the "mark of the Lord upon us." As Hagar in the wilderneſs did not ſee the fountain of water, though it was near her, till *God opened her eyes*, Gen. xxi. 19. So the ſprings of divine life and holineſs, which the Spirit of God has raiſed within our ſouls, are ſometimes, as it were, hidden from the ſoul itſelf, till

till the Spirit ſhew it to the believer, by aſſiſting his enquiring faculties, and ſhedding down a divine light. This leads me to

The *ſecond* thing propoſed: And that is, To ſhew *the method by which the Spirit generally works in this aſſiſting teſtimony.*

1. He doth it *by ſtirring up the ſoul to a moſt diligent ſearch*, and *making it unwearied in this toil and labour of ſelf-examination.* I call it *labour* and *toil*, for by nature we are very unwilling to be accurate, and ſtrict, and juſt, in the ſearch of ourſelves. The Spirit of God will hold us to it, when we find great averſions and diſinclination in our own hearts to ſuch a work. We, who have ſo much ſin, are ſometimes much afraid to look into the bottom of our ſouls, leſt we ſhould find no ſincerity there: It is the Spirit of truth therefore, that excites us to diligence in theſe holy enquiries.

2. *He gives us ſometimes a fair opportunity and occaſion for the exerciſe of ſome grace in a clear and diſtinct manner;* and hereby aſſiſts the witneſs of our ſpirits. Perhaps by the diſcovery of the grace and glory of Chriſt in a ſermon, he invites our faith, our love, our holy joy, to appear: By a kind providence, and ſome new ſignal mercy, he puts us in mind of thankfulneſs: Or if our ſouls have lain long in a ſecure careleſs frame, he leaves us (it may be) under ſome ſpiritual affliction, ſome

ſome terrible temptation, and awakens us to thoughtfulneſs, repentance, holy mournings, and longing deſires after God. Thus the characters of adoption appear in our hearts, that before were covered over with the duſt of this world, and buried under the cares or vanities of life.

3. *It is the Spirit of God that inwardly aſſiſts theſe holy principles, and ſtrengthens them in their exerciſe, when he hath given an outward and providential occaſion to awaken them:* For as he is the firſt ſpring of all the powers of the new creature, ſo he is a conſtant aſſiſting principle to promote their holy exerciſe. He dwells in the ſaints for ever, and is an everlaſting ſpring of their holineſs. It is he that excites and manages the vital motions of our ſouls, and makes it appear by holy exerciſes, that we have ſpiritual life in us; otherwiſe the providential occaſion and opportunity for the exerciſe of ſuch a grace might be given, and paſs away, and be loſt, while the ſoul itſelf lies ſluggiſh, negligent, and inactive, if the Holy Spirit did not ſet it on work: For *we are not of ourſelves ſufficient even to think* or do *any thing* truly good, 2 Cor. iii. 5.

4. *The Spirit of God ſometimes aſſiſts this witneſſing work, by bringing ſome word of ſcripture into the mind, wherein the character of a child of God is deſcribed, agreeable to ſome holy diſpoſition which we find working in our own*

own hearts: And this makes the matter clear, plain, and evident to the conſcience. Though this be not a conſtant method with God, yet ſurely the experience of many Chriſtians can ſubſcribe to the truth of it, when they have been ſearching their own hearts, to find what grace is there, ſome proper ſentence of ſcripture has been brought to their minds, wherein they have, as in a glaſs, beheld their own face, beheld the likeneſs of the children of God in their own ſouls; and then they have been conſtrained to pronounce with holy joy concerning themſelves, *Surely I am a child of God.*

Nor is it at all hard to ſuppoſe, that God's Holy Spirit ſhould caſt a happy ſentence of his own word into our minds, or bring it to our remembrance, in order to evidence our adoption, when it is generally granted the evil ſpirit may have ſuch acceſs to our minds by the organs of the brain, or the fancy, as to ſuggeſt to our thoughts profane, impure, malicious, or blaſphemous ſpeeches, or to tempt us to preſumption or deſpair.

5. It might be added, in the laſt place, *that the diſcerning faculty of the ſoul is enabled to act aright by the Spirit of God, and kept from all dangerous miſtakes and ſelf-deceivings in this work of examination.* Hereby he makes it appear, that ſuch a principle of faith, or love, or repentance, which we find working within us, is true evangelical repentance,

pentance, is ſincere love, and faith unfeigned; and that it is indeed God's own work in the heart: And thus he puts an end to our doubtful fears about the truth of grace.

Theſe things ſeem to me ſo plain and intelligible in themſelves, and ſo correſpondent with thoſe divine aids of the Holy Spirit which are promiſed to the children of God in all their ſerious and religious exerciſes, and without which we can do nothing that is truly good, that I truſt it will be eaſily underſtood, and readily received, by thoſe who are much converſant in tranſacting their moſt important affairs with God, according to the light of ſcripture.

The ſubſtance of this teſtimony of the Spirit to our adoption may be repreſented, in ſhort, after this manner: The Spirit of God in his word has deſcribed the marks and characters of his children; and, by his gracious influence, he works theſe holy diſpoſitions, theſe characters in our hearts: God has given us a conſcience, which is a faculty of comparing ourſelves with the rule of his word, and judging accordingly: The Spirit of God, by his power, and by his providence, awakens theſe holy diſpoſitions into lively exerciſe: He aſſiſts our enquiring and our judging faculties, helps us to compare our own ſouls with his word, and thus confirms our own ſpirits in the belief of this Propoſition, that *we are the children of God.* This

is

is the more *common and ordinary* way and method, whereby God is pleaſed to give the comforts of adoption to his people.

It is the remark of a judicious writer on this ſubject, " That as on the one hand " wicked men are ſometimes convinced in " their own conſciences that they are chil- " dren of wrath, and further confirmed in " this perſuaſion by that evil ſpirit who la- " bours from hence to drive and hurry them " on to deſpair; ſo, on the other hand, when " the hearts of believers ſpeak peace to them, " telling them, that *God is their Father*, re- " conciled to them in Chriſt, and the Holy " Spirit ſaith the ſame alſo, then they have " perfect peace."

That the Spirit of God may thus concur with the inward conſciouſneſs and teſtimony of our own ſpirits, in ſo important a matter as our love to God, and his love to us, is very eaſy to be ſuppoſed, when the apoſtle ſpeaks of this concurring witneſs of the Spirit of God to his own conſciouſneſs, and his ſincere love of his countrymen, when he ſays, Rom. ix. 1. *My conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt.* There is nothing in all this account of things but what is perfectly agreeable to the word of God, and to the rational actings of created minds, under the happy influences of the uncreated Spirit.

The

The *third* thing propoſed was, To give a few *advices relating to this ordinary witneſs of the Spirit of God concurring with our ſpirits.*

1. *Satisfy not yourſelves with one ſlight examination, but renew the work frequently, and ſearch whether you find the ſame marks and evidences of adoption remaining in you or no.* Do not content yourſelf to run the whole courſe of life with one or two ſolemn examinations of your own hearts, when God firſt began to work religion in you, but enquire and ſee whether your principles of grace abide in the ſame brightneſs, evidence, and activity, as in time paſt. Perhaps by this means you may diſcern a ſenſible growth in grace and you may find abundant advantage, worth all the care and labour of ſelf-examination; or, if you find decays and backſlidings, it will awaken repentance and zeal toward a recovery.

2. *In this ſearching work keep aloof from carnal ſelf-love.* When you call yourſelves to an account, ſet yourſelves before the bar of your own conſciences, as before the bar of God; for conſcience is a judge for God within us. Paſs an impartial ſentence concerning yourſelves, even ſuch as you ſuppoſe God himſelf would paſs, if you were now ſummoned before his tribunal. Suffer not yourſelves now to be biaſſed by the eſteem or the fondneſs that we all have naturally for ourſelves. The matter is too important, the

enquiry too ſolemn and awful, for you to indulge *ſelf-flattery*. It will be no profit to deceive your ſouls in this work, for you cannot deceive God. Come therefore and apply yourſelves to this holy exerciſe, with an unbiaſſed deſign to pronounce concerning yourſelves whatever you find the word of God pronounces concerning you.

3. *Truſt not merely to your own ſpirits, without earneſt prayer for the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God.* Jer. xvii. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things: Who can know it?* Therefore David prays importunately, as we have before obſerved, that God would *ſearch* him and *try* him, Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24. Beg of the Lord that he would not ſuffer you to be deceived, when you ſet about this ſearching work; for it is a matter of moſt high concern. A miſtake here is dangerous, and it may be for ever fatal.

4. *When you find any character of adoption made to appear with ſtrong evidence upon your ſouls, be not utterly diſcouraged, though you do not find all the characters of grace there.*

It is true indeed, where there is a new nature and a divine principle wrought in the heart, there are the ſeeds of every holy diſpoſition; but they do not all ariſe to an equal ſtrength, nor ſtand forth and ſhine with equal evidence. The Spirit of God may ſometimes witneſs with your ſpirits, though but one mark of adoption appear plainly,

plainly, while others are not ſo eaſily diſcovered. A ſingle bough of the tree of life has upheld ſouls from drowning in deſpair, when they could but lay hold of that one bough. Many a Chriſtian, under great difficulties, inward tumults, doubts, and darkneſſes of ſpirit, have been enabled to hold on their way by living upon ſome one plain ſcripture, and finding the ſenſe of it tranſcribed into their own hearts. Some one evidence of true faith, or holy love, of repentance, or heavenly-mindedneſs, has been ſet in ſuch a divine light before them, that they could not well miſtake; and this has borne up their hope in an hour of temptation. But I muſt add

5. *Though you ought to bleſs God for any mark of his children in your hearts, yet you ought not to content yourſelf with one mark, ſince the ſcripture has given us many.* The faculties of our nature are various, and they have their various operations: The paſſions or affections of our ſouls are many, and ſome of them are frequently in exerciſe: Now all the paſſions and faculties of nature, with all their operations, ſhould be conformable to the rule of the word of God; and when it is ſo, there appears a variety of marks of the children of God upon us, even as many as there are powers or paſſions belonging to our ſouls. Whether it be *love*, it is love to God, and the children of God; for they are

born of the ſame Father: Whether it be *hatred*, it is hatred to ſin, and to all that diſpleaſes God: If it be *delight*, it is a delight in heavenly things, and in holy ordinances: If it be *deſire*, it is a deſire after God, after a ſenſe of his love, a greater acquaintance with him, a more exact conformity to him, and a breathing after the heavenly ſtate, where we ſhall never ſin againſt him. Thus ſince the ſeveral powers and principles in our nature being ſanctified, yield us ſeveral diſtinct evidences of adoption, let us not be contented with one of them, but preſs forward toward a ſtronger hope of our ſonſhip. Let us labour and pray that all the ſprings of action within us, being ſanctified by the Holy Spirit, may yield the fruits of holineſs, may ſhine bright in a way of evidence, and raiſe our hope to full aſſurance.

6. When you have found any comfortable and ſolid hopes of your adoption, by the Holy Spirit witneſſing in this rational way with your ſpirits, that you are the children of God, *walk in the chearful ſenſe of it continually;* go on in the way of holineſs, rejoicing in the Lord. This was one end why Chriſt has given us the characters of his diſciples in ſcripture, that when we find them in our own hearts we might rejoice. This was part of the deſign of his *farewell-ſermon* to his apoſtles, wherein ſome of theſe characters are deſcribed. See John xv. 11. *Theſe things*

things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. The bleſſed *Spirit*, in the ſame diſcourſe, is promiſed as a *Comforter*, and we ought to walk in the light of his conſolations. It is the moſt evangelical and the moſt conſtraining method of his grace, when he carries on his ſanctifying work by the influence of peace and joy; and it is one of the glories of a Chriſtian, that the *joy of the Lord is* his *ſtrength*, to fulfil all the duties of righteouſneſs.

DISCOURSE XII.

The Extraordinary Witneſs of the SPIRIT.

The Second Part of this SERMON.

Rom. viii. 16.

The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.

IT is great and divine condeſcenſion, that the bleſſed God ſhould ever take any of the children of wrath, and make them the children of his love: But he condeſcends yet farther, when he ſends down his own Spirit to give us notice of our adoption, and to acquaint us with our high and holy privilege.

The common and ordinary method whereby the Spirit of God bears witneſs that we are his children, is by drawing out our own ſpirits to ſearch and enquire into the filial and holy diſpoſitions which he himſelf has wrought in our hearts, and by aſſiſting our conſciences

conſciences in this enquiry. Thus by his gentle, eaſy, and inſenſible influences upon our ſouls, he leads us on in a rational manner to infer and conclude, that we are born of God, becauſe we find the image of God impreſſed on us, and thoſe divine qualities wrought in us, which belong only to his children. This has been the ſubject of the foregoing Diſcourſe.

I proceed now to conſider the *extraordinary witneſs* of the Holy Spirit, when in a more immediate * and more ſenſible manner he raiſes in the hearts of ſome of his ſpecial favourites a powerful and a pleaſant ſenſe of their intereſt in the love of God.

This *extraordinary witneſs* may be diſtinguiſhed into two kinds.

1. It may imply ſome very uncommon and powerful confirmation of the ordinary and rational witneſs, by moſt ſenſible impreſſions of divine love on the heart, by which it is raiſed to holy raptures, to heavenly joy and aſſurance. Perhaps the apoſtle Peter may have ſome reſpect to this, 1 Pet. i. 8. where, ſpeaking of Chriſt, he adds, *Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye*

* *Note*, By the word *immediate* here I do not mean without ordinances, ſuch as prayer, meditation, &c. but rather *ſudden* and *ſpeedy*.

rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory. Here it is ſuppoſed in the text, that the perſons to whom he writes were conſcious of their own faith in an unſeen Saviour, and their love to him; and thence they could infer that they were accepted of God: But without ſome peculiar and more uncommon influences of the Holy Spirit, they could hardly be ſaid to ariſe to ſuch *joy* as was *unſpeakable* and *full of glory*, or glorified joy, as the Greek text expreſſes it, χαρα δεδαξασμενη, a-kin to that which the ſaints poſſeſs in the glorified ſtate.

2. There is yet another ſort of extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit; and that is, when in an immediate and powerful manner the Holy Spirit impreſſes the ſoul with an aſſurance of divine love, and gives the heart of a ſaint ſuch a full diſcovery of his adoption or intereſt in the favour of God, without the more ſlow and argumentative method of comparing the diſpoſitions of their ſouls with ſome ſpecial characters of the children of God in ſcripture. The Spirit of God may witneſs in an extraordinary manner to our adoption, by an inward experimental ſenſe of the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart, aſſuring ſome of his favourites that they are the ſons or daughters of God, without any particular examination of the heart at that time, or any preſent reflections on the characters of adoption deſcribed in the Bible.

I confeſs the ſeveral acts of the mind of man, even the reaſoning and argumentative acts of the ſoul, are ſo quick and ſudden, and the ſenſible joy that may ariſe from them follows in ſo ſwift and cloſe a ſucceſſion, that it is ſometimes very hard to diſtinguiſh and define the bounds and limits of the ſeveral actions, perceptions, and impreſſions on the mind. On this account I ſhall not be ſolicitous to keep up the diſtinction between theſe two kinds of the extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit, but ſhall only ſpeak of them in general, as diſtinguiſhed from the ordinary witneſs of the Spirit, by the more immediate ſenſations of divine love, that are impreſſed through the peculiar favour of God on the ſouls of ſome of his children.

I am very ſenſible that, in our preſent age, the Spirit of God is ſo much withdrawn from the Chriſtian church in all his operations, that a man expoſes himſelf to the cenſure of wild *enthuſiaſm*, and a heated fancy, if he ventures to diſcourſe at all on ſuch a theme as this: But as I am perſuaded theſe things were frequent matter of Chriſtian experience in the primitive days of the goſpel, and in ſcenes of ſharp perſecution, ſo I am ſatisfied that God has not utterly with-held his divine favours of this kind from his churches and his children, for ſixteen hundred years together; and I hope I ſhall make it appear, that a ſuppoſition of this extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit

Spirit may be maintained, without giving a looſe to all the roving dreams of a diſtempered brain, or to the bold preſumptions of weak and conceited men, or falſe and deceitful impoſtors.

The method of my Diſcourſe is this.

Iſt, I will offer ſome *very probable proofs* that there has been, and is, ſuch a thing as the *extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit of God.*

IIdly, I ſhall mention *a few of the ſpecial ſeaſons or occaſions* of ſuch a divine favour.

IIIdly, Shew how *it may be diſtinguiſhed from deluſions of Satan*, and from the mere ferments and vivacity of animal nature, or a diſordered fancy.

IVthly, Repreſent ſome *other characters* of it, and ſhew wherein it differs from the ordinary witneſs of the Spirit. And then

Vthly, Conclude with a *few Directions* relating to it.

Iſt, Let me offer ſome proofs that there is ſuch an extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit. Now that this is not the language of wild enthuſiaſm, or a mere fantaſtic notion of the brain, will appear from theſe few Conſiderations.

I. *Conſideration.* The great God, the Father of ſpirits, can reveal a truth to the mind of his creature, with ſuch life, and power, and evidence, that the mind cannot diſſent from it,

it, or refuse to believe it; the overpowering light may be so divine and convincing, that the creature may be fully and justly persuaded it is a divine truth. Those who believe the prophets and apostles divinely inspired, can have no reasonable doubt about this proposition.

II. *Consideration.* It has pleased the great and blessed God to give such immediate assurances of his own love to some of his favourites of old, by visions and voices, and the message of angels, and by inward impressions on their minds by his own Spirit. Thus Abraham was assured that *God was his God, and would be his exceeding great reward*, Gen. xv. 17. Thus concerning Moses, it was made known that he was the *friend of God*, Exod. xxxiii. 11. Thus Daniel was often informed that he was *a man greatly beloved*, Dan. ix. 23. and x. 11, 19. Mary Magdalene, and some others, who conversed with Christ when he was here on earth, had a particular assurance *that their sins were forgiven them.* Paul was assured that he was *a chosen vessel.* And indeed, all the apostles had sufficient evidence of their acceptance with God, and their interest in the love of Christ, by the extraordinary communications of the Holy Ghost. It is the opinion of a late ingenious writer, that not only the apostles themselves, but even all the primitive Christians that were truly converted by their ministry, received

these

theſe extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt in ſome degree; which did not only witneſs to the *Chriſtian religion*, but to the comfort of thoſe who had it, with the aſſurance of God's pardon and acceptance. (See *Miſcellanea Sacra*, Eſay i. p. 117, 126, 134.)

III. *Conſideration.* There is no evidence from reaſon or ſcripture, that all ſuch immediate divine favours are ceaſed; and though there is not the ſame occaſion for the frequency of them as there was in the beginning of Chriſtianity, yet the Spirit of God is a free and unconfined agent; and ſince it is plain from ſcripture, that he doth ſtill dwell in his people, and carry on his divine work among the churches of Chriſt in all ages, to the end of the world, why may he not ſometimes diſcover his power and grace in an extraordinary manner, above and beyond his ordinary and uſual operations?

IV. *Conſideration.* Some *ſpecial ſeaſons and occaſions* may ariſe, and indeed have ariſen, wherein the bleſſed Spirit of God has thought it proper, vaſtly to exceed the meaſures and rules of his ordinary operations, in the exerciſe of his offices of illumination and ſanctification? And why may it not be allowed in his conſolations alſo?

(1.) There may be ſome reaſon for extraordinary acts of his illumination; as when perſons are not able to read the holy ſcriptures, or when the Bible is withheld from them,

them, and when they have enjoyed but very poor and insufficient ministrations of the gospel; the blessed Spirit may sometimes shine into humble souls with some uncommon rays of divine truth, and they may enjoy more sensible teachings of the Holy Spirit: Or sometimes a person of low parts, and weak understanding, may have been illuminated in the knowledge of some scriptural doctrine, beyond what the mere exercises of their own feeble reason upon scripture would have attained to in so short a time: And perhaps some Christians of better capacities may have enjoyed this favour also. Luther, that extraordinary servant of God in the Reformation, is said to have oftentimes learned more of the gospel on his knees in prayer, than in his laborious studies.

(2.) There may be, and there have been, instances of an extraordinary work of sanctification. To what glorious degrees of piety, virtue, and true holiness, have some persons been raised in a very short time? A most astonishing change has been wrought in their souls, and a swift preparation for heaven, beyond what appears in the ordinary work of the Spirit, by the rational or persuasive influence of outward ordinances.

And since the Spirit of God appears sometimes, for the honour of his own grace, to be an extraordinary *Enlightener* and *Sanctifier;*

Why

Why may he not be an extraordinary *Comforter* alſo?

V. *Conſideration.* If we can credit the accounts which have been given by holy men in later ages, and ſome of which are recorded in the memoirs of their lives, we muſt confeſs that there have been inſtances and experiences of moſt ſublime and extraordinary conſolations of the bleſſed Spirit beſtowed on them; ſuch as, upon the moſt rational ſurvey of things according to ſcripture, we cannot but conclude to have been truly divine.

It would take up many whole pages to cite ſuch inſtances as we find upon record, in the lives of particular perſons. Many ſuch may be found in the late Mr. Fleming's *fulfilling of the ſcriptures*, eſpecially in Scotland. I ſhall mention one only, and it ſhall be a moſt unconteſted example, in our land in England, even in our own day; the example of a perſon whoſe ſolid ſenſe, whoſe deep ſagacity, whoſe ſedate judgment, and the ſuperior excellence of his reaſoning powers, leave no room to charge him with vain and deluſive raptures of a heated imagination. The name is the late venerable Mr. John Howe. The name commands reſpect, and confirms the narrative. He wrote the following paragraphs in the blank leaf of his own Bible.

" December 26th 1689. After that I had " long, ſeriouſly, and repeatedly thought with " myſelf, that, beſides a full and undoubted " aſſent

" assent to the objects of faith, a vivifying sa-
" voury taste and relish of them was also ne-
" cessary that with stronger force, and more
" powerful energy, they might penetrate into
" the most inward center of my heart, and
" there being most deeply fixed and rooted,
" govern my life; and that there could be no
" other sure ground whereon to conclude and
" pass a sound judgment, on my good estate
" Godward; and after I had, in my course of
" preaching, been largely insisting on 2 Cor.
" i. 12. *This is my rejoicing, the testimony of a*
" *good conscience*, &c. this very morning I
" awoke out of a most ravishing and delight-
" ful dream, that a wonderful and copious
" stream of celestial rays, from the lofty
" throne of the divine Majesty, did seem to
" dart into my open and expanded breast. I
" have often since, with great complacency,
" reflected on that very signal pledge of spe-
" cial divine favour, vouchsafed to me on that
" noted memorable day; and have with re-
" peated fresh pleasure, tasted the delights
" thereof."

" But what of the same kind I sensibly
" felt through the admirable bounty of my
" God, and the most pleasant comforting in-
" fluence of the Holy Spirit, on October 22.
" 1704. far surpassed the most expressive
" words my thoughts can suggest. I then
" experienced an inexpressibly pleasant melt-
" ing of heart, tears gushing out of mine eyes

for

" for joy that God ſhould ſhed abroad his " love abundantly through the hearts of men; " and that, for this very purpoſe, mine own " heart ſhould be ſo ſignally poſſeſſed of and " by his bleſſed Spirit, Rom. v. 5."

Beſides this inſtance of ſo ſedate, ſo rational, and ſo judicious a perſon, there have been many others of our pious fathers in England, but eſpecially, as I ſaid before, in the church of Scotland, have enjoyed ſuch divine viſits, and given very ſenſible evidence that the Holy Spirit is not utterly withdrawn from men, even as to his extraordinary influences.

If any thing could be added to this teſtimony of Mr. Howe, it ſhould be the inſtance of Mr. Flavel, the famous practical divine in the weſt of England, who, in his treatiſe of the *ſoul of man*, gives us this account of himſelf, but with his name concealed: " That, " in a journey on horſeback, he fell into a " divine meditation, wherein he had ſuch " tokens of the love of God, and his intereſt " in the divine favour, manifeſted to him, " that greatly ſurpaſſed all the rational and in- " ferential evidences that ever he had; though " he was known to be a cloſe walker with " God, and an eminent ſaint, and a lively " preacher of the bleſſed goſpel of Chriſt."

VI. *Conſideration.* There have been ſeveral learned and judicious divines, who have declared their firm belief of ſuch extraordinary manifeſtations

manifeſtations and witneſſings of the bleſſed Spirit: which belief has riſen from their acquaintance with the ſcriptures, and their obſervations of the dealings of God with the ſpirits of his people, in ſome uncommon caſes, though they have not profeſſed any ſuch experiences of their own. So the worthy and pious Mr. Caryll, on Job x. The Spirit brings in the *witneſs of the water, and the blood*, which is his mediate work. But beſides and above theſe, he ſometimes gives a diſtinct witneſs of his own, which is his immediate work; and is, in a way of peculiarity and tranſcendency, called the *witneſs of the Spirit.*

The learned and venerable Dr. Owen, in his *Treatiſe of communion with God*, p. 293. ſaith, "There are two ways whereby the "Spirit worketh this joy in the heart of be-"lievers. (1.) He doth it immediately by "himſelf, without the conſideration of any "other acts or works of his, or the interpo-"ſition of any reaſonings, or deductions, and "concluſions. This does not ariſe from our "reflex conſideration of the love of God, but "rather gives occaſion thereunto. He ſo "ſheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, "and fills them with gladneſs by an immedi-"ate act and operation. Of this joy there is "no account to be given, but that the Spirit "worketh it when and how he will: He ſe-"cretly infuſeth and diſtils it into the ſoul,

" prevailing againſt all fears and ſorrows, " filling it with gladneſs, exultations, and " ſometimes with unſpeakable raptures of the " mind." To this the Doctor adds,

(2.) " The Spirit works this joy alſo me- " diately by his other works towards us, *&c.* " Theſe are after the common or ordinary " manner."

That great and evangelical divine, Dr. Goodwin, in Vol. iv. Part 2. p. 95, 96. declares, " That, beſides the teſtimony of the " water and the blood, that is, faith in the " death of Chriſt and ſanctification, there is " a third teſtimony, and that is the Holy " Ghoſt himſelf, which is immediate; that " is, though it backs and confirms what the " other two ſaid, yet it quotes them not, " builds not his teſtimony on them, but raiſes " the heart to ſee its adoption and ſonſhip, " by an immediate diſcovery of God's mind " and love." And a little after he adds, " This witneſs is not a teſtimony fetched " out of a man's ſelf, or the *common* work of " the Spirit in man, as the others were, but " he ſpeaks from himſelf: As when the broad " ſeal is put to by a king, he writes *teſte me-* " *ipſo;* ſo doth the Spirit ſpeak in the lan- " guage of a king, *teſte meipſo*, witneſs myſelf; " and receives and borrows no witneſs from " what is in us, but makes his own abundantly " ſatisfy."

The late pious and judicious expoſitor of ſcripture,

ſcripture, Mr. Samuel Clark, has written in the defence of this extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit, and deſcribes it thus: "When "the Spirit of God, without conſideration "of, or reflecting upon, any of thoſe gracious "qualifications he has formerly wrought in "the ſoul, does, by his own immediate power, "imprint this perſuaſion upon the heart, "*Thou art a child of God;* and by an inward "and ſecret, yet powerful voice, doth ſay to "the ſoul, *Thou art a believer, thy ſins are* "*pardoned*, or to that purpoſe; and ſo ſatis-"fies the ſoul concerning its ſtate and con-"dition."

I proceed, in the *ſecond place*, to conſider the *ſpecial ſeaſons and occaſions* wherein ſuch favours have been beſtowed on men.

1. The Spirit of God has, in a more immediate manner, made extraordinary impreſſions of the love of God on the ſoul, when perſons have been called *to great and difficult ſervices* in the church, or to *uncommon ſufferings* for the ſake of Chriſt. St. Paul was in *labours more abundant, and in ſufferings above meaſure*, beyond the reſt of the apoſtles; he had need of eminent ſupport: He was aſſured by a viſion, that he *was a choſen veſſel:* He was taken into heaven before-hand, and had a ſight and taſte of unſeen future glories, to encourage his zeal and patience, 2 Cor. xii. And if we read the hiſtory of the martyrs,

even in later as well as in ancient times, we can hardly forbear to believe this truth, when they have exulted under a ſenſe of divine love, in the midſt of racks and flames.

2. When the *temptations* of ſome humble ſouls *have been extraordinary*, and their afflictions above meaſure, preſſing and overwhelming; when the hurry and tumult of their ſpirits hath not ſuffered them to recollect in a calm and rational way, the evidences of their adoption, the Spirit of God may ſee fit to give a ſaint ſuch a divine cordial to keep him from ſinking. When a Chriſtian has been long conteſting with doubts and darkneſſes, and been oppreſſed with many fears, the bleſſed Spirit has ſometimes let a ſudden light into the heart, and with or without ſome word of ſcripture, has given ſurpriſing conſolation. Mr. S. Clark tells us of a miniſter, who having been under a ſpirit of bondage many years, and now even ready to die in that condition, when Rom. viii. was begun to be read to him, a little before his laſt gaſp, ſtopping at ver. 1. " There is therefore ' now no condemnation to them that are in ' Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, ' but after the Spirit:' *Stay*, ſaid he, *I never ſaw ſo much in thoſe words in all my days, though I have read them often, as I ſee now.* This ſeems to be an inſtance of the ſudden and extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit in his enlightening grace, as well as his witneſſing

witneſſing and comforting power. This has been the caſe of ſome holy ſouls in their dying hours, or when juſt departing from the body, they have, as it were, entered into the world of ſight before they have left this world of ſenſe, and fleſh, and blood; or rather, heaven itſelf hath entered into their ſpirits.

3. When Chriſtians of the firſt rank of piety *have been warmly engaged in moſt lively acts of devotion*, in fervent and holy prayer, and they have been brought near to heaven in the frame of their ſpirits, they have had a divine foretaſte of the joys of the upper world, and an aſſurance given them of their own intereſt therein. Daniel had been engaged in fervent and zealous interceſſion for the church of God, when a heavenly meſſenger was ſent to acquaint him, that he was *a man greatly beloved*, Dan. ix.

Or 4. Perhaps the Spirit of God may think it neceſſary to uphold ſome poor weak Chriſtians of the loweſt rank of underſtanding, by ſome immediate impreſſions of the love of God, when he ſees that their love to God is great and ſincere, but they are ſo unſkilled in the exerciſes of their rational powers, that they hardly know how to compare their hearts with the ſcripture, and paſs a determinate judgment on themſelves. Such weak creatures, it may be, could never come to any ſettled hope or peace, without ſuch divine condeſcenſions; and eſpecially if they are

under ſome ſpecial temptation, which gives a confuſion or darkneſs to their thoughts.

Thomas was but a weak believer; he knew not how to build his faith of a riſen Saviour on what Chriſt himſelf had foretold, or on the teſtimony of his brethren, which were ſufficiently juſt, and rational foundations for his faith: Therefore, in great condeſcenſion to his weakneſs, *Chriſt appeared to him, and ſhewed him the print of the nails in his hands, and the wound of the ſpear in his ſide:* Upon which diſcovery, Thomas cries out with joy, *My Lord, and my God!*

It is poſſible that other occaſions may ariſe in the courſe of divine providence, wherein the great and gracious God may ſee it neceſſary to beſtow ſuch peculiar and extraordinary favours on ſome of his people; but there ſeems to have been ſufficient evidence already given, that ſome of the wiſe and the learned, as well as ſome of the weaker rank of Chriſtians, have had heavenly experience of this uncommon witneſs of the Spirit.

The *third thing* I propoſed, was to ſhew *how theſe extraordinary favours of heaven may be diſtinguiſhed from the deluſions of Satan*, and from the mere ferments and fits of vivacity in animal nature, or a diſordered fancy.

It has been ſaid indeed, though perhaps too raſhly, that they who go about to aſſert an immediate teſtimony, will never ſecure the ſoul from deluſion: Satan will ſoon find artifices

artifices to counterfeit this teſtimony, and bear witneſs in the Spirit's ſtead; and when we think we have the Spirit of truth to aſſure us, we ſhall have the father of lies to deceive us.

But if Chriſtians are careful and watchful in this matter, there are ſigns whereby the teſtimony of the Spirit may be diſtinguiſhed from his deluſions.

Some divines have ſuppoſed this teſtimony of the Spirit to be known as the ſun is, by its own light; and a man who hath ſeen the ſun, can never miſtake the moon for it; the very glory of the ſun manifeſts itſelf, and convinces every beholder. And perhaps in the ancient inſpiration of the prophets, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the days of the apoſtles, there was a divine ſelf-diſtinguiſhing light that accompanied theſe heavenly favours, which we know not how to judge of at this diſtance of time; we who never have experienced what divine inſpiration is.

But the ſureſt way of our diſcerning the extraordinary witneſſings or joys of the Holy Spirit, is by the effects; which are ſuch as theſe.

I. *It fills the ſoul with great degrees of humility and ſelf-abaſement, under a ſenſe of its own vileneſs, guilt, and unworthineſs;* as holy Job, when he ſaw God in ſome more uncommon manifeſtations of his power and glory, he *abhorred himſelf in duſt and aſhes,*

Job xlii. 4, 5. So Iſaiah, when he had beheld the Lord ſitting upon a throne, high, and lifted up, *Wo is me*, ſaith he, *I am a man of unclean lips*, Iſa. vi. 1, &c. But vain deluſions puff up the ſoul with an high conceit of itſelf; as Simon Magus, when, by the power of the devil, he performed ſome ſtrange feats, he gave out that he was ſome great perſon, Acts viii. 9, 10. Many other inſtances of the like kind might be produced out of the hiſtories of the Chriſtian church.

II. By this teſtimony of the Spirit *the ſoul is led to a more ſenſible dependence on divine grace*, having an inward and effectual conviction how dark and weak it is in itſelf, and how powerful is the grace of God, and the operation of the Spirit: it makes the ſoul run to the protection and ſuccour of almighty grace; whereas vain deluſions of the fancy, or temptations of the devil, rather lead the ſoul away from divine grace, and incline it to a ſort of ſelf-ſufficiency and dependence upon its own attainments, its own light, and its own ſtrength.

III. The witneſs of the Spirit *does more eſtabliſh the ſoul in the great doctrines of the goſpel, and particularly in faith on Chriſt Jeſus.* Many of theſe immediate teſtimonies of old were given to the primitive Chriſtians with this deſign, to confirm them in the doctrines of grace, and in the faith of Chriſt Jeſus. When St. Paul was tranſported into the third heaven,

heaven, 1 Cor. xii. and had doubtleſs an uncommon manifeſtation of the love of God; as ſoon as the next danger and trial appeared, *he beſought the Lord importunately*, and could not be ſatisfied till he received this anſwer from Chriſt; *my grace is ſufficient for thee*, 1 Cor. xii. He was weak in himſelf, but ſtrong in Chriſt. But, on the other hand, it has been evident too often, when the devil has endeavoured to delude weak creatures in this reſpect, he has drawn them off from Chriſt, or filled their imaginations with ſome ſtrange errors, and led them away into falſe and fooliſh opinions, contrary to the doctrines of the goſpel. The bleſſed Spirit will perform his office when he becomes a *Comforter*, he will be an *Advocate* for Chriſt, (for ſo the word *paracletos* alſo ſignifies;) he will *take of the things of Chriſt, and ſhew them to the ſoul;* he will guide his people into the ſame truths to which he witneſſed ſo gloriouſly in the primitive times; and will confirm believers in the faith of the holy ſcriptures, John xvi. 13, 14.

IV. The witneſs of the Spirit draws out the heart to ſome ſpecial degrees of love to God, *and engages it in warm and lively thankſgivings for ſuch divine and undeſerved favours:* The ſoul admires the rich grace and goodneſs of God in Chriſt Jeſus. Thence will ariſe an utter averſion to all ſin, an hatred of every thing that is diſpleaſing to God, a powerful

powerful ſenſe of indwelling corruption, a watchful care to pleaſe God in every thing, and to make ſome humble returns of love for ſuch ineſtimable favours, and divine manifeſtations; whereas the warm preſumptions of fancy, or the deluſions of the devil, leave the ſoul in a more careleſs and unholy frame; or, at leaſt, they are oftentimes attended, or quickly followed, by ſome powerful temptation to groſs iniquity; which the deluded ſoul too often and too eaſily complies with: And there have been many inſtances, wherein perſons under the power of vain deluſions from the devil, have been drawn away to the practice of various ſorts of crimes, and particularly to foul and ſcandalous ſins.

In the laſt place, I might add alſo, in general, that though the Spirit of God may witneſs in an extraordinary manner to our adoption, when the ſoul cannot plainly ſee, or does not actually and plainly recollect the characters of adoption in itſelf; *yet it never leaves the ſoul without awakening the exerciſe of ſuch graces as are indeed the ſure marks and evidences of the children of God:* Where the Spirit comes, it will bring ſome of its own fruits with it, in a ſenſible manner. Now the *fruits of the Spirit are love*, *joy*, *peace*, *long-ſuffering*, *gentleneſs*, *goodneſs*, *faith*, *meekneſs*, *temperance*, Gal. v. 22. If we are comforted by the Spirit, we *ſhall crucify the fleſh*, *with its affections and luſts*, and endeavour to walk

walk and live as becomes the ſons and daughters of ſuch a Father as God is.

Upon the whole, I conclude, that it does not ſeem to be agreeable to the wiſdom and providence of God, in the government of the world, to ſuffer the devil ſo exactly to counterfeit the works of his own Spirit, as to leave no marks or evidences whereby to diſtinguiſh them from the impoſtures of Satan. Truth and holineſs are the objects of the devil's hatred; and though he may tranſform himſelf in ſome particulars into an angel of light, yet he brings along with him ſome peculiar evil badge, whereby he may be known or diſtinguiſhed: And if Chriſtians will be ſincere and honeſt, watchful and diligent, to examine not only the preſent impreſſions, but the ſucceeding effects of ſuch ſort of aſſurances of their adoption, together with earneſt prayer to be kept from all deluſions, I can hardly think that God will ſuffer his own people to be impoſed upon in a matter of ſo ſacred importance.

The *fourth thing* I propoſed, was to mention briefly ſome characters of this extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit, wherein it differs from the ordinary witneſs.

1. The *extraordinary* teſtimony of our adoption *is a more ſenſible and ſtrong impreſſion upon the ſoul; which ſeems to be diſtinguiſhed in itſelf from the more ſlow, ſucceſſive, and*

and rational operations of the human faculties. The ſpirit of a Chriſtian, ſearching out his own intereſt in the love of God, exerciſes his reaſoning powers, lays down theſe propoſitions: *He that believes in Chriſt, or he that loveth God,* is a child of God. Again, *I believe in Chriſt, or I love God; and then it infers this concluſion; Therefore I am one of his children.* Now the Spirit of God, in his ordinary and uſual influences, does ſo gently, ſo ſecretly, and in ſuch a con-natural manner, aſſiſt theſe operations of the ſoul, that it ſeems to be all our own work; and the influences of the Spirit are ſeldom ſenſibly diſtinguiſhed from the operations of our own faculties; and we learn, that we have the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit herein, rather by the doctrine of ſcripture, and by its ſanctifying effects, than by any powerful ſenſations of a ſuperior influence on our ſouls: But in the extraordinary witneſs the caſe is otherwiſe; for the ſuperior and external influence appears ſtrong and ſenſible. The Holy Spirit impreſſes the concluſion, or the aſſurance of our adoption, with power upon the ſoul, without any ſucceſſive deduction of it from any foregoing propoſitions, ſets it in a bright light, and perſuades the ſoul to believe it.

2. This extraordinary witneſs *is uſually ſhort and ſudden, the other is more durable;* this is only a cordial to encourage us in an hour

hour of danger, or ſupport us in a fainting ſeaſon; the other is our common food, and our daily refreſhment. It has been ſaid of this favour, it is *rara hora*, *brevis mora:* A viſit ſeldom beſtowed, and of ſhort continuance.

3. The *ordinary witneſs* of the Spirit of God with our ſpirits, proving our regeneration and adoption in a rational way, *may in ſome meaſure be made out to others; but the extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit is like the white ſtone of abſolution*, *and the new name written in it;* Rev. ii. 17. *which none knows but he that receives it.* It is like *hidden manna*, with which God, at ſpecial ſeaſons, may feed his children in ſecret.

4. The extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit *fills the ſoul with great and exceeding joy*, *and brings it*, *as it were*, *within the confines of heaven: It is joy unſpeakable*, *and glorified*, as the apoſtle Peter calls it: The other maintains the ſoul in ſuch a degree of peace, comfort, and well-grounded hope, as carries the Chriſtian onward through the difficulties and duties of life, though without ſuch raptures of inward joy. There is an unknown ſenſation of heavenly light and love, which runs through the ſpirit of a Chriſtian, under ſuch extraordinary aſſurances of divine love; and it has been with a ſaint at ſuch a time as it was with Peter in the mount, when he ſaid, *Lord*, *it is good for us to be here.* When he

he was overwhelmed with revelation and pleaſure, ſuch a ſoul has felt more than feeble nature was able to bear, and has cried out, *It is enough, Lord;* or, *It is too much for a ſtate of fleſh and blood, Lord: Either withhold thy comforts, or enlarge the veſſel; for I cannot bear theſe joys.*

5. This extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit doth not belong to every ſaint. *Many a Chriſtian, it may be, paſſes the whole courſe of his life, and practiſes a regular faith and holineſs for many years, without this exceſs of joy, this aſſurance of God's love.* Believers are generally led on in a rational way of evidence and hope; and walking in the paths of holineſs, having *good hope through grace,* hold faſt an humble confidence unto the end. The extraordinary witneſs is exceeding rare and uncommon, at leaſt in our days.

I proceed now to finiſh this Diſcourſe, by offering to your thoughts a few advices concerning theſe witneſſings of the Spirit of God, both in his ordinary and extraordinary ways.

1. Though you have never felt any ſuch immediate influences of the Spirit of God, giving you an extraordinary aſſurance of your intereſt in his love, yet *have a care of ridiculing and reproaching* theſe peculiar and uncommon operations of the Holy Spirit: *Take heed of pronouncing them all at once the deluſions of the devil, the viſions of an heated fancy, or vain and idle dreams.* It is certain that

that God has beſtowed ſome ſuch favours on men in the primitive days of Chriſtianity. It is certain alſo, that there is no place of ſcripture that declares, that theſe influences are utterly ceaſed, or that God will beſtow no more ſuch divine favours. It is certain yet further, that wiſe, and judicious, and holy men, have had very extraordinary impreſſions of this kind made on their ſouls, ſo that they were almoſt conſtrained to believe that they were divine; and the effects of theſe impreſſions have been holy and glorious: We ſhould ſet a guard therefore on our hearts and our tongues, leſt we caſt a reproach and ſcandal on ſuch ſacred appearances, which the Spirit of God will hereafter acknowledge to have been his own work.

2. *Let not humble Chriſtians, who walk with God according to the ordinary methods of his grace, be diſcouraged, though they have never found this extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit, nor taſted of theſe peculiar favours.* Value the evident marks and characters of the children of God, wrought in your hearts, more than ecſtaſies of joy and pleaſure. Value mortification to ſin more than raptures; for mortification is a certain ſign that the Spirit of God dwells in us, and that we are heirs of life. Rom. viii. 13. 'If you by the 'Spirit mortify the deeds of the fleſh, you 'ſhall live.' Heaven is the place of complete joy; heaven is the ſtate where ſight and ſenſe

ſhall

ſhall be exerciſed; but we are here ordained to *live by faith*, 2 Cor. v. 7. We may have the aſſiſting preſence of the Spirit of adoption, and by that Spirit may ſay unto God, *Abba*, *Father*, without the extraordinary witneſſing of that good Spirit.

3. *Dare not to believe any ſudden raptures to proceed from this extraordinary teſtimony of the Holy Spirit, unleſs you find ſome* conſiderable meaſure of thoſe ſanctifying effects of them which I have deſcribed. I have granted that, in particular ſeaſons of trial, when the natural ſpirits ſink and fail, and temptations are exceeding ſtrong, God may give this immediate teſtimony, on purpoſe to bear up the ſoul from ſinking; yet we ſhould not dare to truſt ſuch ſort of vehement impreſſions, and pronounce them divine, if we neither find any of the plain ſcriptural marks of the children of God upon us, before or after theſe impreſſions. There is great danger of depending upon ſuch raptures, if they leave no evident and laſting effects of ſanctification behind them. Where the Spirit ſhines with ſuch a divine light, he will warm the heart with uncommon love, and the ſoul muſt be conſcious of ſome ſuch rational evidence of adoption, ſuch a love to God in the heart, as will effectually prove that God has firſt loved us.

Perhaps this is one reaſon why ſome Chriſtians fall under ſo many doubts and fears, becauſe

becauſe they live more upon their inward ſenſations of joy, their tranſports of pleaſure in religion, which they call the extraordinary witneſs of the Spirit, than they do upon the characters of the children of God, which ſhould be written in their hearts, and by which they ſhould endeavour to ſearch out and to evidence their intereſt in the favour of God.

4. Let every believer walk humbly before God, in all the paths of holineſs. *Take heed leſt at any time you reſiſt the Bleſſed Spirit in his ſanctifying influences, leſt he withdraw your comforts of every kind.* Be not deceived, for the Spirit of God will not be trifled with. If *you ſow to the fleſh*, after you have received any of the witneſſings of the Spirit, *you may expect to reap deſertions*, ſorrow, pains, and long mourning. Keep a conſcience tender, and afraid of every ſin; grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed to the day of redemption, Eph. iv.

5. *Wait on God in all his holy ordinances, and wait for the manifeſtations of his love.* It is in a regular attendance on the public and private duties of religion, that we may hope to meet with the witneſſing Spirit; there the principles of grace are wont to be awakened, and called forth into lively exerciſe; and where your love to God your Father, and to Jeſus your Saviour, is excited, and your ſouls exert themſelves as becomes the chil-

dren of God, you have moſt reaſon to expect the preſence of the Holy Spirit, to bear witneſs to your adoption, and to your intereſts in his love. He will never beſtow conſolations of an ordinary or extraordinary kind, where there is a wilful neglect of the duties he has preſcribed. *Frequent the ſervices of his holy temple, the out-goings of God our King are in his ſanctuary. His power and glory*, his grace and kindneſs, are made viſible in his houſe. There has he promiſed his own preſence; and where his preſence is, he often brings with him the witneſſing Spirit.

AN

ESSAY

ON THE

POWERS AND CONTESTS

OF

FLESH AND SPIRIT.

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POWERS AND CONTESTS

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ESSAY.

IT is agreed by all the more ſober and thinking part of the world, that *man is a compounded creature;* and it is made evident from this plain and eaſy obſervation, (*viz.*) that he puts forth hourly ſuch different kinds of action as one ſimple being could never perform. *Fleſh* and *ſpirit* are the two ingredients that go to the compoſition; yet they keep their own natures ſtill diſtinct, unmingled, and unconfounded. By the *fleſh*

we eat, drink, walk, and ſleep, and are a-kin to brute animals; by the *ſpirit* we think, know, and chuſe, and hold kindred with angels.

It appears to every careful obſerver, that each of theſe parts of the man have their particular and diſtinct natures, qualities, and operations.

The *fleſh*, or body, includes in it the limbs, blood, and breath, with all the groſſer and finer materials, ſolid or fluid; that make up the animal; it has many inward ferments and appetites of its own; it has ſeveral viſible, as well as hidden motions; and it receives various impreſſions, made by outward objects of ſenſe, which are proper to itſelf, and in which the ſpirit has no ſhare.

On the other hand, the ſoul or *ſpirit* includes the underſtanding and will, which are its chief powers: It has its thoughts and conceptions, its judgments and reaſonings, its acts of choice, averſion, and deſire, in great variety; which are peculiarly its own, and belong not to the *fleſh*.

But while we dwell in this preſent world, there is ſuch a near and ſpecial union between *ſoul* and *body*, that there are very few operations or affections of the *mind*, which do not receive a ſenſible turn or influence from the qualities and ferments, the impreſſions, powers, and paſſions, of *fleſh* and *blood*.

Sometimes

Sometimes theſe animal motions attend or follow the acts or exerciſes of the *mind*, and yet even then they increaſe them in many caſes: So when the *ſoul* is aſhamed, the blood flushes in the face, and the ſhame is doubled; when the *ſpirit* is angry, the cheeks kindle, or grow pale, and the inward wrath burns fiercer. So in a fit of fear, the blood retires, the fleſh trembles, the natural ſpirits flutter, or ſink into faintneſs, and the ſoul is more terrified and overwhelmed.

At other times theſe inward ferments of the juices of the *body* are entirely beforehand with the *ſoul;* theſe motions or impreſſions of the *fleſh*, and ſenſe, and animal nature, may firſt awaken, and then maintain the anger, or fear, or love, or other affections of the *mind.*

Thus moſt of the actions of man in this preſent ſtate are of a mixed nature, wherein both *fleſh* and *ſpirit* concur, and each perform their ſeveral parts; though in ſuch a manner, that, in many caſes, it is hard to ſay how far the *fleſh* and how far the *ſpirit* have their diſtinct ſhares of influence. Yet there is one excellent and unfailing *rule* to judge of this matter, if we could but always apply it right; and that is, *Whatſoever knowledge, conſent, or choice, is in any action, belongs to the mind; and what implies mere matter, ſhape, or proper motion, muſt be attributed to the body.*

Theſe appetites and affections of human nature, which are the mingled operations of *fleſh* and *ſpirit*, are either lawful, ſacred, or ſinful; and they are *properly* and *formally* ſo called, partly according to the different objects of them, and partly according to their various degrees, or ſome other circumſtances of time or place, that may attend them; as will be made evident by ſuch inſtances as theſe. Thus it will appear, that the ſame action or paſſion may be determined to be lawful, ſacred, or ſinful, if it be exerciſed toward different objects, or in different degrees. Thus it is lawful to be *hungry* and *thirſty*, and to deſire proper food, bread and wine; and to deſire, with faith and holy affections, to eat the bread and drink the wine at the Lord's ſupper, is a ſacred action. But to covet that meat or drink, that bread, or that wine, which belongs to another man, is ſinful; for it is a violation of the tenth command, and becomes a tranſgreſſion. So to fear the great God, or to love him, is a ſacred affection. To fear a robber, or a roaring lion, or to *love* my houſe, or my ſervant, are very lawful affections: But if my *love* or my *fear* of any creature exceeds my *fear* or my *love* of God my Creator, it becomes hereby ſinful. It is lawful, or rather it is religious and holy, to be *angry*, to *hate*, and to be *aſhamed*, when ſin is the object of theſe paſſions; but to be *aſhamed* of virtue and religion,

religion, where I am called to profeſs them, or to *hate* my neighbour, or even mine enemy, or *to be angry* without a cauſe, or above a proper degree, are all criminal paſſions, and render a man guilty before God.

The mere motions and ferments of *fleſh* and *blood*, or whatſoever ſhare mere animal nature has in theſe actions or affections of the man, can have no *moral good* or *evil* in them, conſidered apart from the ſoul; nor are they *properly* called lawful or ſinful in themſelves; for they are the pure operations of brutal matter, till the *ſoul* or the *will* indulges them, or approves them, commands them, or complies with them. Yet if the objects of theſe fleſhly motions be forbidden by the laws of God, or if the degree be exceſſive, or the time or place unlawful, then theſe motions and ferments of the fleſh may be called ſinful; not *formally* in themſelves, but *occaſionally;* becauſe the ſoul ſo often complies with them, and becomes guilty; and thus theſe operations of the *fleſh* are ſad occaſions to ſin.

Now in this preſent fallen ſtate, wherein all the children of Adam are found, theſe ſinful motions and ferments, appetites and paſſions, abound in our *fleſh* and *blood;* partly as we derive too much of them from our ſinful parents, and partly as we have too much encouraged and ſtrengthened them ourſelves, by frequent practice and indulgence.

It

It is evident alſo, that the greateſt part of the actions of our lives are ready to be influenced by appetite or affection; and it is plain, that the outward ſenſes of the body, or the inward ferments, motions, and impreſſions of fleſh and blood have ſo large a ſhare in them, that they are called the *deeds of the body*, the *deſires*, *luſts*, and *affections of the fleſh*, in many places of ſcripture; thence it comes to paſs that our *fleſh* becomes the chief cauſe and occaſion of ſin to the ſoul.

Now though it be difficult (as I have hinted) in many particular actions, to determine preciſely how far the influence of the *fleſh* reaches, and how far it is the act of the *mind* or *ſpirit*, yet it is of great uſe in the Chriſtian life to ſearch into theſe matters, in order to find how far our actions are criminal and guilty, that we may abaſe our ſouls before God, and take ſhame to ourſelves ſo far as we are culpable; and on the other hand, that from a melancholy or ſuperſtitious miſtake, we may not charge ourſelves with more guilt than God charges us with, or lay heavier loads upon our own conſciences than the divine law lays upon us.

We ſhall find theſe enquiries alſo of excellent uſe to lead us to proper methods for the mortification of ſin, and to ſhow us the juſtice and wiſdom of divine conduct, and the holineſs and beauty of the providence of God,

God, in appointing our preſent ſtate of trial, in order to a future judgment.

The firſt thing I ſhall diſcourſe on here, is the unhappy influence that our fleſh, or animal nature, has to tempt us to ſin. And then

IIdly, I ſhall ſhew what powers the ſoul is furniſhed with to reſiſt the ſinful motions of the fleſh, and to maintain the ſacred warfare.

This is the Propoſition therefore that I ſhall firſt lay down in my Diſcourſe; (*viz.*) That *the principles, ſprings, and occaſions of our ſinful actions, lie very much in the fleſh; and theſe have a fatal and unhappy influence to lead the ſoul or ſpirit into ſin.*

I ſhall make this evident from the word of God, eſpecially from the writings of the bleſſed apoſtles; and ſhall confirm it by many common obſervations, and an eaſy train of reaſoning.

When thoſe ſacred writers have occaſion to deſcribe ſin, in its principles or operations, they uſe the words *fleſh*, *fleſhly*, or *carnal*, the *body*, or the *members*, with much freedom and frequency. St. Peter ſpeaks of *walking after the fleſh;* 2 Pet. ii. 20. of *alluring* men *by the luſts of the fleſh;* 2 Pet. ii. 18. of *fleſhly luſts, that war againſt the ſoul*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. St. Paul bids us *mortify the deeds of the body;* Rom.

Rom. viii. 12. and he calls the principle of ſin *the body of death*, Rom. vii. 24. He ſpeaks of *ſin reigning in our mortal bodies*, Rom. vi. 12. He places the ſinful principles (which he calls the *law of ſin*) in our very *members*, Rom. vii. 23. And particular ſins he calls *our members*, Col. iii. 5. And in correſpondence with him, the apoſtle James ſpeaks of *luſts that war in our members*, Ja. iv. 1. And John and Jude make mention of the *luſts of the fleſh*, *and garments ſpotted with the fleſh*. And there are few words more frequent on St. Paul's tongue than the word *fleſh*, when he would ſignify *ſin;* the mortification whereof he calls *crucifying the fleſh*, *with its affections and luſts*, Gal. v. 24. He names *adultery*, *fornication*, *idolatry*, *hatred*, *envy*, *murder*, *drunkenneſs*, *revellings*, and ſuch like, *the works of the fleſh*, Gal. v. 19. Perſons in a ſinful ſtate are ſaid *to be in the fleſh*, Rom. viii. 8, 9. A courſe of ſinning is called *ſowing to the fleſh*, *living after the fleſh*, *minding the things of the fleſh*, *walking after the fleſh*, *fulfilling the deſires and luſts of the fleſh*, in ſeveral parts of his epiſtles.

Both in ſanctified and unſanctified perſons, ſin, in the judgment of St. Paul, lies very much in the fleſh, as to the ſprings, principles, and occaſions of it. See Rom. vii. 5. compared with the 18th and 25th verſes. In Rom. vii. 5. St. Paul ſpeaks concerning the natural and unregenerate ſtate: *When we were*

were in the fleſh, *i. e.* all fleſh, no ſpirit, *i. e.* no ſpiritual life, *then the motions of ſin did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death.* And when he ſpeaks concerning himſelf in a regenerate ſtate, at the end of that chapter, he deſcribes ſin ſtill as having its occaſion and cauſe much ſeated in the fleſh. See. 18th and 25th verſes: *I know that in me*, (that is, in my fleſh,) *dwelleth no good thing: I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind. With my mind I ſerve the law of God, but with my fleſh the law of ſin.* So that, conſidering himſelf either in a natural or in a regenerate ſtate, ſtill he ſuppoſes the great occaſion of ſinful actions to proceed from the fleſh.

I confeſs that in ſome places of the New Teſtament, and perhaps in ſeveral of theſe which I have now cited, the word *fleſh* may be uſed ſomething *figuratively*, to ſignify *all the principles of ſin that are in human nature*, whether they immediately reſide in the mind, or in the body, as the ſubject; but the *figure* itſelf ſeems to be borrowed from this very ſentiment, *That the fleſh, with its affections and appetites towards fleſhly objects, is the chief ſpring and occaſion of ſin.*

I might add alſo, that there are ſome other places of ſcripture, where the word *fleſh* muſt neceſſarily be taken in a literal and proper ſenſe, denoting the body to be the ſeat or ſpring of many ſinful affections;

as

as Eph. ii. 3. where the *deſires of the fleſh* are diſtinguiſhed from the ſinful *deſires of the mind*. And 2 Cor. i. 7. where both the *filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit* is mentioned; and there are very few places which will not allow us to underſtand it in a literal ſenſe. And it is evident to any one who compares the various parts of the writings of this apoſtle, that he ſpeaks ten times of the *body*, the *fleſh*, or the *members*, as the ſprings of ſin, where he once mentions the *luſts of the mind;* intimating, that the far greateſt part of the ſins of men are derived from their *fleſh*, and are owing to their compliance with the ſinful deſires or affections of the *body*.

I would not be miſtaken here, as if I ſuppoſed the fleſh to be the only *immediate* ſpring of all our ſins; though, perhaps, it is the *original*, and remote ſpring of all, as I ſhall ſhew preſently: But the ſoul of man, being once depraved, has many ſinful qualities in it; the underſtanding and the will, the very *mind and conſcience*, *are defiled*, Tit. i. 15. The ſoul itſelf has ſome propenſities to things that are forbidden, as well as ſinful averſions to God, and things holy and heavenly. There are the *luſts of the mind* as well as *luſts of the fleſh*. There is a *filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit*. The devils, who have no fleſh and blood belonging to them, are vile ſinners; theſe are called *ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places*, Eph. vi. 12. or, as it may

may be tranſlated, *wicked ſpirits in heavenlies;* that is, in the airy regions: So the ſpirit of man has ſins of its own, that it borrows not immediately from the fleſh: There is a pride in the mind, ariſing from learning, and intellectual powers, and accompliſhments; there are vain and exceſſive deſires of human knowledge; there is a ſinful curioſity, prying into ſecret futurities; there is a glorying in ſelf, a vanity of mind, and ſelf-conſidence, inſtead of truſting in God, and giving him the glory of all: There is, indeed, a ſecret diſlike and averſion to God and holineſs, in the ſoul of every unſanctified ſinner; theſe are more ſpiritual iniquities.

I might add alſo, that there are ſeveral of thoſe ſins which, in ſome appearances of them, are numbered among the *works of the fleſh*, (becauſe they are often excited, and almoſt always increaſed, by the humours and ferments of the body;) which yet, in ſome other operations and appearances, begin in the ſpirit, belong chiefly to the ſoul, and muſt be called *ſpiritual ſins*, or *luſts of the mind;* ſuch as malice and envy, ſelf-conceit, emulation, hatred of good men, *&c.* which are doubtleſs found in the fallen angels, thoſe evil ſpirits, who have no fleſh about them. Now as an unſanctified ſoul may be ſometimes guilty of theſe when in the body, ſo, when it is diſmiſſed from fleſh, we muſt grant, that it would be filled with all theſe iniquities

iniquities, theſe ſpiritual luſts, for ever, tho' none of the carnal ſins, no appetites to fleſhly objects, ſhould follow it into the ſeparate ſtate.

But the point which I propoſe to prove is this, that though there may be ſeveral ſins that ariſe chiefly from the mind, yet there are multitudes of diſorderly appetites, ſinful inclinations and averſions, as well as violent immoderate tendencies towards lawful objects, ſeated in our animal nature, in our fleſh and blood, in this mortal part of our frame and compoſition, wherein we are akin to the beaſts that periſh; and it is by the ſenſes, by theſe ſenſitive motions and ferments of fleſh and blood, that the human ſoul is moſt frequently led into temptation and ſin: And more eſpecially I may venture to ſay, that the ſoul of a true Chriſtian, which is ſanctified by the Spirit of God, and has a new and heavenly temper and bias, and a *divine nature given* it, owes moſt of its actual tranſgreſſions to the fleſh, and the luſts thereof, to which it is united in the preſent ſtate.

There is one *objection* that ſeems neceſſary to be anſwered; and that is drawn from the words of our Saviour, Mark vii. 21, 23. *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,* &c. *All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.* Now ſome perſon may ſay, it is evident, that by the *heart* he did not

not mean that inward bowel ſo called, but the *ſoul* itſelf; becauſe, according to the vulgar philoſophy, and common ſentiments of the Jews, the ſoul of man had its chief reſidence in the heart; and upon this account they attributed to the heart the ſeveral affections and inward operations of the ſoul, whether they were ſinful or holy; and in this ſenſe our Saviour may be ſuppoſed to attribute to the ſoul, or ſpirit in man, all theſe wickedneſſes.

But it is eaſy to ſolve this difficulty two ways.

1ſt, That neither the philoſophy of the Jews, nor the common language which our Saviour uſed, did make any nice diſtinction in thoſe principles of human actions, what ſhare the *ſpirit* had in them, and what the *fleſh;* but they uſed the word *heart* for all thoſe inward powers of the man whence outward actions proceeded; and this becauſe the ſprings and motions of the blood and life, as well as the ferments of ſeveral paſſions, were found there: So that our Saviour uſing the common language of the people, does by no means exclude the inward ferments of the fleſh from their ſhare in theſe ſinful actions; but rather includes them in the word *heart.*

2dly, If we could ſuppoſe the word *heart* in this place to ſignify merely the *ſoul* or *ſpirit*, yet it would by no means exclude the inward ferments of the fleſh from being the

firſt ſprings and occaſions of many of theſe ſinful practices; for they do not become *ſins* till the ſoul has conſented to them; nor can they break forth into outward acts without the command, or, at leaſt, the ſinful compliance of the ſoul. Thus all thoſe actions that may juſtly be called *evil* and *wicked*, ſuch as Chriſt here mentions, proceed from the ſoul, ſo far as they are truly and properly ſinful; and yet the firſt ſecret occaſions and incentives of many of them may ſpring very much from the powers of the fleſh.

Now as I have made it to appear in ſome good meaſure, that the *ſprings and principles of ſin lie very much in our fleſhly natures*, from the frequent expreſſions of holy ſcripture, ſo it may be made yet more evident ſtill, by theſe following conſiderations, drawn from reaſon, obſervation, and experience.

1. Conſider how *different are the ſins of men, according to their peculiar conſtitutions of fleſh and blood.* Theſe may be called the *ſins that eaſily beſet us*, Heb. xii. 1. becauſe our temper and conſtitution is always preſent with us.

Thoſe that are of a briſk and ſanguine make, whoſe blood flows high and vigorous, how often are they tempted by the gay ſcenes of life, to purſue vanity, and to indulge forbidden pleaſures? Luxury and intemperance are their peculiar vices: They follow after carnal mirth with eager guſt, as well as with long

long forgetfulneſs of God, and of things ſpiritual. By this means they indulge a fatal ſecurity, and groundleſs preſumption of long life here, or happineſs hereafter, being ever animated by lively ſenſual fancies, appetites, and paſſions.

On the other hand, thoſe that have melancholy humours mingled with their natural conſtitution, are inclined to ſullen vices, to an unſociable and uncharitable behaviour among men, as well as they are often tempted under the influence of theſe prevailing humours of the body, to deſpair of the mercies of God, and, upon this account, to abandon all religion.

Some have a greedineſs of deſire wrought into the very frame of their natures; and theſe are inclined to ſelfiſh and covetous iniquities, and often are found hard-hearted and uncompaſſionate to the neceſſities and cries of the poor.

Others are ſour and peeviſh in their native temper, having an exceſs of ſharp juices mingled with their fleſh and blood; and theſe are eaſily awakened to ſudden wrath and reſentment, and kindled into a flame of ſinful anger upon the firſt and ſlighteſt provocation.

I might inſtance in ſeveral other qualities of the conſtitution, whereby multitudes of iniquities ariſe amongſt men, and ſufficiently diſcover that the fleſh is a moſt fruitful ſpring

of temptations, and a conſtant occaſion of ſin.

2dly, Conſider *how many particular ſins we may be inclined to, by reaſon of ſome ſudden diſtemper of body, or long and habitual diſeaſes that attend fleſh and blood.*

When the four or acid humours in animal nature riſe to an irregular height, or when the body is frequently exerciſed with ſharp and tedious pains, even a well-tempered man becomes peeviſh and fretful; he vexes his own ſpirit with impatience; he murmurs againſt the hand of God; and this ſecret uneaſineſs, (though it dares not appear in viſible rage againſt his Creator) yet it cannot contain itſelf in ſilence, but breaks out with too much evidence and guilt, quarrelling with his fellow-creatures round about him: He tires out his beſt friends with perpetual diſquietude; he loſes his meek and gentle temper; and the man that was wont to be always pleaſed and eaſy, now reſents every thing, and ſcarce any body can pleaſe him.

This appears with bright evidence to be occaſioned by bodily diſorders; for even our natural hunger makes us peeviſh: When ſharp and corroſive juices prey upon the ſtomach itſelf, for want of food, how touchy and fretful does our temper grow, till a good meal provides matter for thoſe digeſtive juices to act upon; then the fleſh grows eaſy, and the good humour returns.

But

But to purſue the obſervation concerning diſeaſes.

When the natural ſpirits are reduced very low by long weakneſs, how cold and unactive are ſome good men? When phlegmatic humours prevail in the body, how ſlothful are ſome Chriſtians in every duty? How backward to all active ſervices of God or man? Even thoſe very perſons who were once chearful and zealous, and ready to every good work.

After the ſame manner, when, through diſtemper of body, black and melancholy juices get the aſcendant over the more ſprightly animal powers, how often do we find perſons of a ſweet affable behaviour grow ſullen and unſociable? Thoſe who were fond of company and converſation ſeek dark corners, and ſolitary chambers of retirement; they grow liſtleſs to every diverſion, and will hardly admit a viſitant, or give anſwers to the common queſtions of life.

Again, When the powers of nature are broken by continual diſeaſes, the man of courage becomes fearful, and ſtarts aſide from duty, at every appearing difficulty: The man of faith gives in to fears and doubts, to perpetual unbelievings, and ſuſpicious thoughts, with regard to the promiſes of God and all the encouragements of the goſpel.

And to put this matter beyond all diſpute, experience teaches us, that the very ſame

perſons who have been fretful, peeviſh, ſlothful, ſullen, or exceſſively timorous, under the influences of theſe ſeveral diſtempers of body; when, by the means of medicine, they have been reſtored to health, they have returned again to the chearful practices of thoſe ſingle and ſocial virtues, which ſo long lay cramped, confined, and buried under the diſeaſes of the fleſh.

Now if the occaſion of theſe ſeveral ſorts of ſins, both of omiſſion and commiſſion, did not chiefly ariſe from the fleſh, why ſhould the ſame Chriſtian ſo remarkably find his whole temper and his conduct altered for the worſe by the diſeaſes of his body, and reſtored again by the recovery of his health?

3dly, *Conſider how different are the ſins of youth and old age;* how contrary are their ſeveral temptations.

The youth delights in gay company, public vanities, ſenſual amuſements, luxury, and profuſeneſs; he contemns money, and deſpiſes his eaſe, to purſue with labour the gratifications of fancy and wanton appetite; and hereby he neglects all the duties of retirement, and ſerious thoughtfulneſs. The old man loves his eaſe above all things, except his money; he neglects and deſpiſes the pleaſures of the fleſh, and gay diverſions; but he daily hoards up his gold for fear of want; and in counting over his treaſure he waſtes the latter hours of his life, which he ſhould

ſhould ſpend in a preparation for death at hand.

The youth fears nothing, and ruſhes on to guilt headlong; the old man is frighted at every thing, and ſhrinks back from the moſt neceſſary duties.

Whence are all theſe differences of ſin? The natural philoſopher will give happy hints toward the ſolving this queſtion with eaſe and truth: He knows that one is occaſioned by the florid blood, and juices, and active powers of young human nature; theſe hurry the ſoul on to purſue every fleſhly delight. The other is owing to the languid and groſs ſtagnant humours that mingle with the blood of old age: Theſe render him dull and unactive; and his perpetual fears of want, and poverty, and of every other evil ariſe partly from the poor low ſtate of thoſe feeble ſpirits that attend that laſt and expiring period of life. The unholy ſoul is too eaſily influenced by both theſe extremes, in the different ſeaſons of its dwelling in this mortal and ſinful fleſh; and the ſoul that is ſanctified finds it hard work to reſiſt.

4thly, Let us conſider yet again, *how great a part of the ſins of men ariſe from the preſence of tempting ſenſible objects;* and theſe are conveyed to the mind by the ſenſitive powers of the fleſh. What influence could the whole world of enticing objects have on the ſpirit, if the notices of them were not brought to

the ſpirit by the ſenſes? The preſence of alluring temptations ſtrikes ſtrongly on the outward organ of ſenſe, awakens the carnal appetite, and with a powerful, an unhappy, and almoſt conſtraining force, perſuades the ſoul to guilty practices and enjoyments. At other times it cauſes a ſinful neglect of proper duties to God or man; or, at leaſt, it calls in vain thoughts to mingle with our ſervices, both civil and religious; and thus gives them a ſenſual taint, and pollutes and ſpoils them.

Particular circumſtances of time and place, where ſenſual temptations attend us, become unhappy occaſions of defiling the ſoul. And where is the time, or where the place, in which ſuch objects or occaſions are not to be found? The day-light opens before us the ſcenes of a vain world, crowded with ten thouſand allurements to ſin; nor can the ſhadows of the night conceal or baniſh thoſe temptations that attack us at other avenues beſides the eye. A wanton ſong, an immodeſt touch, the ſcent of dainty meats, or the remembered reliſh of delicious wine, are ſufficient to provoke the fleſhly appetites, and to inflame the ſoul to the purſuit of iniquity. Thus every ſenſe has a hand in the conveyance of ſin to the ſpirit.

Not the board, nor the bed, not the ſhop, nor the exchange; no, not the cloſet, nor the temples of worſhip, are ſecure from temptations that aſſault the ſoul, by means of

of this wretched fleſh. We are in danger when in the midſt of company; nor are we ſafe when ſolitary and alone. How often have eyes and ears been the unhappy torches to kindle either unlawful love, or malice and revenge, according as a man hath been caſually led within ſight or hearing of the perſon that has allured him to pleaſure, or put him to pain? Pictures and ſtories have many a time become fatal inſtruments of the ſame miſchief. When we ſit at a well-ſpread table, doth not our palate often tempt us to improper food, and to riot upon a beloved diſh? We venture to taſte of the luſcious compound, even though we ſuſpect, or are almoſt certain, it has ſickneſs or diſeaſe lurking in it; and ſometimes we indulge the freedom of appetite in the moſt wholeſome proviſions, to a vicious exceſs and ſurfeit. How many a wretch is enticed to become a glutton, or a drunkard, or to ruſh on to the purſuit of adultery and polluted pleaſure, by his paſſing through ſome inſnaring occurrences of life, and having the ſoul united to this ſinful fleſh? The wanton eye, and the greedy palate, are tempting engines, that draw the mind away to forbidden objects.

It is upon this account that our bleſſed Lord gives advice in his excellent ſermon: *If thy right-eye offend thee, pluck it out; or, if thy right-hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt them* both away *from thee; for it is profitable for*

for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell, Matt. v. 29, 30. And though our Lord may be ſuppoſed here to ſpeak metaphorically, and to bid us part with thoſe beloved ſins that are dear to us as an hand or an eye, yet he deſigns to teach us that the eye, and the hand, and the fleſhly powers, may become wretched occaſions of ſin to us; and if there were no other way to avoid the danger, it is better to bear the pain of parting with thoſe miſchievous and offenſive members, than yield to their temptations, and ruſh on to guilt and eternal miſery.

I might here alſo take notice, that the very preſence of all ſorts of corporeal objects, even the moſt neceſſary, and the moſt innocent, may become occaſions of ſin at ſpecial ſeaſons; as, when we are engaged in any part of divine worſhip, the common and obvious appearances round about us, the walls, the doors, the windows, the furniture of the place, or the perſons preſent, impreſs our ſenſes, and often turn away the thoughts from the ſacred work. We forget God to purſue the creature, even in his own awful preſence, and in the midſt of our ſolemn devotions. A curious ear ſhall wrap up the ſoul in the melody of the ſong, till it has loſt the divine ſenſe and meaning. A vain and wandering eye roves among the faces, the poſtures, and the dreſs of our fellow-worſhippers,

ſhippers, and calls the mind away from prayer and devout attention. Oh how often does the criminal indulgence of theſe ſenſitive powers carry the ſoul afar off from God and religion! How does it break off many a holy meditation in a moment! What long intervals does it make in our addreſſes to our Creator, and interline our prayers with folly and ſin! So, when we are employed in any buſineſs of the civil life, that is our proper preſent duty, our ſenſes glance at ſome other object, and draw the ſoul away to a quite different work, which is ſinful at that ſeaſon; though perhaps it might be the duty of the next hour, or the proper buſineſs of the morrow. And where is the man that has not reaſon to complain often of this ſort of temptations every day, while his ſpirit dwells in this houſe of fleſh?

5thly, Conſider further, *that moſt of the temptations that we meet with, even when the outward objects are abſent, ariſe from the images of them remaining in the brain;* which is (as it were) the ſhop, or ſtorehouſe, of the memory and the fancy. The impreſſions which thoſe objects made on the outward ſenſes, when they were preſent, are conveyed to the brain, and laid up there, ready to appear at the firſt call of the mind, when theſe objects are withdrawn. But they oftentimes alſo ſtart out unbidden, and a whole ſcene of wickedneſs is ſpread all over the imagination, before

before the ſoul is aware; and ſometimes when the ſoul expreſsly forbids it too: Then the corrupt appetites are kindled, and ſinful paſſions awake again. Thus the temptations return, and ſolicit the ſpirit to ſin, even when the objects are afar off, and out of reach: For fancy and memory are but the pictures of ſenſe; it is ſight and hearing at ſecond hand. Now if the ſoul ſeeks and calls for theſe tempting viſions to appear, or if it indulges theſe impure exerciſes of the imagination; if it delights itſelf in theſe criminal ideas when they happen to ariſe, and pleaſe itſelf with theſe painted ſhapes of iniquity, then it too frequently repeats the ſin, and renews its own guilt and defilement.

Such is the compoſition of our natures, that the images on the brain, the traces and footſteps of paſt ſenſations, and the ſprings of fancy and paſſion, are linked together by unknown and unperceived ties; ſo that, when one is touched and awakened, a whole train of images appears at once, and awakens all thoſe fancies, and thoſe guilty paſſions, which were linked and connected together when that leading image was firſt painted on the brain through the organs of ſenſe. So one line of a comedy, or the door of the play-houſe, or the ſound of an actor, or a hero's name, ſhall call over again all thoſe alluring and miſchievous ſcenes which firſt drew the heart away from God and religion, ſpoiled the

the labours of a pious education, and plunged the young ſinner into early debaucheries.

Beſides all theſe miſchiefs that ariſe from the recollection of paſt occurrences, there is an infinite variety of new ſcenes of vice, that fancy can furniſh out on the ſudden, by mingling, joining, enlarging, multiplying, and compounding, the vicious images that the brain can ſupply it with. Thus in this ſhop of vanity, this workhouſe of ſin, and theſe ſecret chambers of imagery, new-deviſed iniquities are coined continually; new engines are forged every minute, by a buſy and fruitful fancy, to charm the ſoul, and tranſport it to freſh guilt and ruin. Thus the treaſury of the brain and thoſe inward and hidden parts of the fleſh, become many times as effectual occaſions of ſin, as all the outward ſenſes joined together, and an army of tempting objects.

6thly, There is another conſideration too, that will make it appear to any perſon of an enquiring and thoughtful genius, that ſin has much of its ſeat and root in the fleſh, if we do but reflect *how many iniquities we commit, which, in their outward appearance, are very nearly imitated by brute creatures*, which have no intelligent ſpirit, no rational ſoul; whoſe blood is the very ſoul, ſpirit, and life of them, as the ſcripture ſpeaks, Lev. xvii. 14. Eccl. iii. 21.

Is

Is there not ſomething like *envy* working in a *dog*, when he forbids the ox from the crib, or the manger, and yet he neither wants nor taſtes the hay nor the corn himſelf? Is he not the picture of *malice*, when he grins with fury, and grows mad with rage, againſt the harmleſs traveller? Does not the *waſp*, that little angry inſect, fix a ſting in us ſometimes without any provocation? And thus it becomes the very image and proverb of *ill-nature* as well as the dog; ſo that men of ſuch a temper are called *dogged* and *waſpiſh*. Does not our Lord Jeſus himſelf give Herod the name of a *fox* for the ſame reaſon, (*viz.*) becauſe the craft, the plunder, and the various and bloody injuries which were practiſed by that man among his ſubjects, and are well preſented by the natural actions of that ſubtile and miſchievous animal, among his fellow-brutes. See Luke xiii. 32.

Is not the *ſwine* often overwhelmed with food by its own greedineſs? And does not that foul animal imitate the glutton well? You grant all this proceeds from the very make and frame, the blood and juices of theſe animals, and from the keenneſs, or other peculiar qualities of their natural ſpirits: And why may not the firſt motions and ſtirrings of the ſame vices in us proceed from the ferments of our blood too? Have you never obſerved the reſemblance of *pride* working in a *peacock*, or a well fed *horſe*; how

how thoſe brutal beings exult and glory, the one in his beauty, the other in his ſtrength and his peculiar endowments? This proud ferment heaves and ſwells their bodily natures: And why may not ſome of our pride be ſuppoſed to begin there too?

I confeſs theſe animals have no rational mind in them, no thinking ſpirit, no will, either to reſiſt or conſent to theſe motions of the fleſh and blood; ſo that they are under no moral law: Theſe actions of theirs are agreeable to their original nature, and are under a divine appointment rather than a prohibition; therefore they are not capable of ſin and guilt. But man, who hath theſe ſame animal motions and ferments of the fleſh, and the ſame appetites, and ſprings of paſſion, had nothing vicious in his original frame and conſtitution, but derived all that is faulty from his firſt parents, who were wilful ſinners, and who ſpoiled their whole nature; and upon this account he will hardly be found innocent.

But his guilt appears much more evident, when we conſider that man has alſo an intelligent mind, a reaſonable ſoul, capable, in ſome meaſure, of reſiſting theſe irregular tendencies of the fleſh; therefore he becomes guilty in the ſight of God, by wilful conſent to them, and indulgence of them, contrary to the forbidding law of his Creator. Now this propoſed conteſt between fleſh and ſpirit

is

is ordained by God our Maker in infinite wiſdom, to be a proper ſtate of trial for us, in order to future rewards and puniſhments.

7thly, I might add, in the laſt place, another argument, to prove that our fleſh is the chief occaſion of ſin to the ſoul, from this conſideration; that *the ſoul at firſt is tainted, corrupted, or defiled, with original ſin, by its union to ſinful fleſh.*

You will immediately enquire, How is this poſſible, ſince the ſoul is a pure ſpiritual being, created immediately by God himſelf, and therefore innocent and holy; and ſince it cannot touch, nor be touched, by any thing corporeal, ſuch as fleſh and blood? In what manner can the ſoul, though united to the body, receive any ſuch ſinful pollution, or ſinful impreſſion, from the body?

Take this account of it in ſhort, in theſe few Propoſitions.

1. Though the ſpirit of man be incorporeal, and is created by God without depraved or ſinful qualities in it, yet it never exiſts, or comes into being, but as a part of human nature; and that not as a piece of new workmanſhip, but as a part of mankind propagated from parents by the continued power of God's creating word; *Be fruitful, and multiply.* When the infant-body of man is ſo far formed as to become fit for union with a rational ſoul, the ſoul comes into exiſtence in union with the body, by the original law of

of creation, and becomes a part of the man, as much as the breath, which is borrowed from the air, or the blood, which is made out of the food of the mother.

2. Thence it follows, that the ſoul is not to be judged of, or conſidered, as a ſingle ſeparate being, but as in union with fleſh and blood, as making up a compound creature of the human ſpecies.

3. Since in the very firſt moment of its being, by the old and general rules or laws of creation and providence, it belongs to a human body, derived from Adam, it is eſteemed as propagated by the parents, and it becomes hereby a ſon or a daughter of fallen man, and is naturally, by the law of creation, involved in the ſame circumſtances of ruin, has no claim to preſerving or ſecuring grace, above the mere and untaught faculties of its intelligent nature.

Then 4thly, Since this body has many ſinful ferments and irregular appetites in it, conveyed down from the original ſinner, the new-made ſpirit being created and joined to the fleſh, is perpetually impreſſed and allured by theſe motions, paſſions, and appetites of the fleſh, and willingly complies with thoſe that are criminal as well as thoſe that are innocent; and thus the young creature contracts actual and perſonal guilt, perhaps, as ſoon as it is capable of exerting any actions

with underſtanding; and ſuch as are properly human, and capable of moral differences.

Thus the ſoul is defiled by communion with the fleſh; and, according to the original law of creation, which is called the covenant of God with Adam, it partakes of a ſinful nature from degenerate parents, and by degrees becomes an actual ſinner.

But I proceed no further on this Head, having delivered my ſentiments in another place more at large, in the deep and difficult Controverſy of original Sin; which may be beſt accounted for in this manner, as far as my judgment reaches.

What I have ſaid here is ſufficient to ſhew that, in the preſent ſtate of human nature, *the fleſh is the chief cauſe and occaſion of ſin to the ſoul.*

Meditation I.

AND are we tempted to ſin ſo often by our fleſhly powers? Then *how little ſhould we reckon ourſelves debtors to the fleſh?* How much miſchief has it already done us? And how much ſtill have we reaſon to fear from its influences, as long as we continue to dwell in it!

Little do you think, O ſinners; little do you think what an enemy you careſs, while you pamper *the fleſh, and make proviſion to fulfil the luſts of it;* it is a foe that ſits cloſe to you,

you, and is a partner of your very natures; and thus it has a thousand opportunities to do you mischief, when other adversaries are afar off: It has done you already more injury than the devil and the world joined together; for in all the pernicious and secret snares which they have laid for your souls, and all the open attacks that they have made upon your virtue, or your peace, the flesh has ever been an accomplice with them, and helped onward the fatal design; besides the many guilty practices into which it has drawn you, without the assistance either of the world or the devil. Not all the deceitful vanities on the earth, nor all the armies of hell, could lead your souls astray from God, and your own happiness, in half so many instances as they have done, if you had not such a secret traitor so near you, that is in league with them for your ruin. And shall this enemy be your counsellor and your guide? Shall this flesh be your chief darling, which has been ever warring against your soul?

Would you not distrust a man that has dwelt with you from your childhood, and every day of your life has led you into some mischief? Would you not be watchful and jealous of all his motions, who has betrayed you into some snare almost every hour? Would you not guard against his perverse practices, if, whenever he took a walk with you, he had thrown you into a pit, and

defiled your garments? Such a dangerous attendant is this fleſh of yours in the preſent degenerate ſtate.

Why then will yé be ſo fond of this tempter, this deceitful companion? Why will you ſpend your beſt moments, the prime of youth, and the very flower of life, to dreſs and adorn, to flatter, and pleaſe, and gratify, ſuch a wretched traitor to your ſoul, ſuch a foe to your eternal welfare? The very beſt of men have already given too much reſpect to it. But when a perſon is ſanctified by divine grace, the fleſh begins then to be ſubdued to ſome uſeful ſervices to God: Then the eye by reading, and the ear by hearing, and the feet by going to attend upon the divine word, are made to help forward his ſpiritual and heavenly intereſt; and many a hundred ſervices of this kind muſt the members of the body do, in order to make the ſoul any tolerable recompenſe for all the injuries that the ſoul has received from its corrupt appetites and paſſions. Well therefore might the apoſtle ſay, *We are by no means debtors to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh*, Rom. viii. 12. Nor do we owe any more of our ſtrength, time, thought, or contrivance, to gratify its vain or ſinful inclinations; for *they that are Chriſt's have ſo far crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts of it*, as to *keep it under, and hold it in ſubjection*, that it

it may not get the maſtery over the ſoul, Gal. v. 24. and 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Nouriſh and ſupport the fleſh, that is your duty: Heal it when it is ſick, and endeavour to preſerve it in health, that it may be a proper ſervant to the ſpirit. It was made for this end; and the ſoul ſhould know its own dignity, and keep the body in its place: But dare not pamper it with too much fondneſs, leſt it uſurp the dominion, and cauſe the ſoul to *walk after it* in the ſinful appetites and inclinations thereof; which is quite contrary to the character of the ſaints, as they are deſcribed by the apoſtle, Rom. viii. 1. *Thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, to whom *there is no condemnation*, *walk not after the fleſh*, *but after the Spirit.*

Meditation II.

IS the body ſuch a foul and wretched ſpring of ſin? Then what a heaven of purity and pleaſure is provided for the children of God at their death, and is contained in thoſe few words of the apoſtle, *Abſent from the body*, 2 Cor. v. 8. When a child of Adam has received a new nature by the new-creating power of the Holy Spirit, and is become a ſon or daughter of God, it is thenceforward, as it were, a priſoner in this untoward manſion of fleſh and blood: It is in a ſtate of perpetual conflict, yet it cannot

change theſe old ſenſual appetites, nor correct at once theſe long habits of irregular deſire. It labours daily in this work; it maintains a vigorous warfare againſt the fleſh; but, through the power of ſenſible enticing objects all around us, it is too often carried away into ſinful compliances. O wretched man that I am, ſaith the apoſtle, what an unhappy law, or ſpring of ſin, is there in my members, that carries me away from the better dictates of the law of my renewed mind, and bears me captive to the law of ſin that is in my fleſh! O wretched man indeed! And who ſhall deliver me? O bleſſed hour of death, that ſhall break the chain, and ſet the priſoner free! O ſweet and glorious moment of releaſe from this body, which tainted my ſpirit early with its poiſonous influences; and, by drawing me away perpetually by its dangerous attachments to things ſenſible, has kept me long at a painful diſtance from my God.

THE

IMPROVEMENT.

THE former part of this Diſcourſe propoſed this ſentiment, (*viz.*) *That the principles and ſprings, or occaſions of ſin, lie chiefly in our bodily natures, in our fleſh and blood:* And as I have made this to appear from ſeveral places of ſcripture, ſo I have proved it from rational obſervations; (*viz.*) how great an influence the different conſtitutions of mankind, their caſual diſtempers, and their various ages of life, have upon the ſoul, to incline it to the practice of different ſins; and all theſe are plainly derived from fleſh and blood. I have conſidered further, what ſinful actions ariſe from the preſence of tempting objects impreſſing the ſenſes; and when the images of them are treaſured up in the brain, they become the ſeeds of impure imagination and ſinful appetite. Many of our ſins alſo are nearly imitated by the brutes that periſh, whoſe blood is their life and ſoul; and even original ſin itſelf is conveyed to us by the fleſh.

Hence we may *learn to judge aright concerning ſeveral caſes of difficulty in the Chriſtian life, relating to ſins and temptations*, and find an anſwer to ſome practical queſtions of great importance.

Queſt. I. *Whether the firſt ſtart or motion of our nature towards unlawful objects is properly ſinful, and brings guilt upon the ſoul?*

Anſwer. The mere ferments of the blood and ſpirits, the appetites and motions, that belong purely and only to the fleſh, and ſpring entirely from it, are not properly ſins; becauſe the fleſh, conſidered in itſelf, is but mere matter: Now mere matter, whether it were united to a rational mind or no, would be thus moved and acted by natural ſprings and impreſſions, and is under no moral law; and *where no law is there is no tranſgreſſion.* The brutal or animal nature, abſtracted from the ſoul, is not capable of knowledge or will, conſent or diſſent; but the firſt moment that the ſoul indulges or conſents to any of theſe irregular ferments, theſe ſprings of unruly paſſion in the blood, and yields to theſe inordinate appetites of the fleſh, it commits ſin; as ſoon as it complies with any of theſe deſires, that are contrary to its duty, the ſoul becomes guilty in the ſight of God; for the proper notion of ſin is the tendency of an intelligent being to things diſagreeable to the divine law; the practice of what is forbidden, or the neglect of what is commanded.

If

If the eye beholds food, though the man be aſſured there is hidden poiſon in it, yet the hungry ſtomach will have a natural appetite toward it, and this is not ſinful; but if the ſoul comply, and the man eats it, or deſires to eat it, he breaks the ſixth command, which forbids all murder. Our Saviour has ſufficiently decided this part of the controverſy in his ſermon on the mount, that the ſoul's very deſire and conſent to ſin is ſinful, Matth. v. 27. And the fuller and ſtronger the conſent of the will is, and the further it goes on to encourage or impel the body to the forbidden action, ſo much greater is the ſin.

When our bleſſed Saviour ſpake theſe words, *He that looketh upon a woman, to luſt after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart*, it cannot be ſuppoſed that he intended to give a law that ſhould make the inward motions or ferments of mere animal nature ſinful; for theſe were not originally and naturally ſubject to the immediate command of the ſoul in the ſtate of innocency, ſo as to be raiſed or prevented abſolutely and immediately by the will, as the motion of the hand or foot is. But his deſign is to ſhew, that the ſoul itſelf inwardly conſenting to theſe animal ferments and motions, or encouraging or indulging them but one moment, is really ſinful in the ſight of God, even though the man did never proceed to the outward

outward and actual commiſſion of thoſe ſins in the fleſh: And hereby he vindicated the law of God from thoſe narrow and corrupt expoſitions which the ſcribes, and doctors, and interpreters of thoſe days put upon it, who would allow nothing to be ſinful but the outward act.

This will appear with fuller evidence, if we conſider that there might be in the fleſh of innocent Adam, ſome natural appetites towards objects that might be forbidden by the expreſs and poſitive law of God; for the fleſh, merely conſidered in itſelf, has a natural propenſity to things that pleaſe and gratify it, without any regard to the unſeen circumſtances or moral relations of things; without any reſpect to a law that permits or prohibits them. Thus Adam, or his partner, might feel an innocent inclination in their animal natures, towards any fruit in the garden that *was pleaſant to the eyes, and good for food*, even to that of the tree of knowledge: And this indeed was neceſſary, in order to make a proper ſtate of trial; and it was fit and becoming divine wiſdom, to appoint ſuch a tree to be the teſt of their obedience. Now while they continued innocent, the ſoul reſiſted this inclination of the fleſh, under a ſenſe that the fruit was forbidden; but the firſt moment that they indulged the fleſh in this irregular appetite, or conſented to it, they made themſelves tranſgreſſors;

tranſgreſſors; then their nature was corrupted; thus they eat the unlawful food, and became the parents of a ſinful race.

The chief differences therefore in this matter, betwixt innocent and fallen man, are theſe:

(1.) That it is probable his fleſh might have no natural inclination to objects apparently hurtful in themſelves, but to ſuch only as might be made unlawful by ſome attending circumſtances, or by an expreſs and poſitive law. And

(2.) Theſe inclinations alſo, perhaps, were but few, and feeble, in compariſon of the multitudes of violent appetites, and irregular deſires, that are found in our degenerate natures, to all ſorts of unlawful objects. And

(3.) That his ſoul had power in itſelf, by due conſideration, to reſiſt and ſubdue theſe appetites of the fleſh, though not abſolutely to prevent them; whereas, in our preſent corrupt ſtate, we are ſoon tranſported and hurried away into a ſinful compliance with them: The ſpirit is ready to yield as ſoon as it feels the temptations of the body; ſo that there are ſcarce any ſuch inordinate ferments or propenſities ariſing or ſtirring in our fleſh and blood, but the ſoul more or leſs conſents to them in ſome degree.

Thus, though the firſt motions towards ſin that are in our members, are not in themſelves properly ſinful, nor is the ſenſe or perception

perception of the mind ſinful neither, for this is natural and neceſſary, according to the compoſition of human nature, if the mind were never ſo holy: Yet theſe motions ſeldom ariſe in our members (eſpecially in an unregenerate ſtate,) but the ſoul is defiled, and becomes guilty; and that is by ſome conſent of will, ſome degree of indulgence to them, or compliance with them. Well then may we cry out with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xix. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors? Cleanſe us, O Lord,* from the multitudes of our tranſgreſſions, and the millions of our iniquities: *Cleanſe us from ſecret* offences, and keep us *free from preſumptuous ſins.*

Queſtion II. *Whether all impure imaginations and blaſphemous thoughts are properly ſinful; and render us guilty before God?*

Anſwer. It is poſſible that ſome peculiar qualities of the conſtitution, ſome diſtempered humours of the body, or ſome ſort of improper food, may excite impure images on the brain; and this is often done alſo by the caſual and unavoidable, occurrences of human life. An indecent picture, an immodeſt or profane ſong, or the vile, the impious, or uncleanly language of the wicked world, may ſpread a dangerous ſcene over the fancy. The devil alſo is a watchful and a buſy adverſary, and we know not what ſecret power he has to draw evil pictures on the brain, to write

write blaſphemy there, or to awaken ſome old traces of immorality. The powers and devices of wicked ſpirits are a great and unſearchable ſecret to us, who dwell in the fleſh. He may buzz into the ear ſome impious ſyllables, or lewd and profane ſounds, eſpecially when his chain is a little lengthened, and he has a divine permiſſion to approach human nature.

But all theſe things that I have here deſcribed may be impreſſed on the animal powers of an innocent perſon: The ſoul may have a very painful perception of all this without actual ſin, ſuppoſing ſtill, that it ſtrives and *wreſtles* both againſt its own *fleſh and blood*, and againſt *thoſe principalities and powers of darkneſs;* ſuppoſing that it fights, and watches, and prays for divine aid, and uſes all the holy armour and the weapons of ſacred appointment, to fence againſt theſe aſſaults of fleſhly and ſpiritual enemies, theſe ſore invaſions of its holineſs and peace.

I confeſs it is hard, in this fallen and imperfect ſtate, to be thus attacked on any ſide, without ſome degree of compliance in an unguarded moment; and eſpecially if we are beſet on all ſides, and aſſaulted by the fleſh, the world, and the devil, at once. It is ſeldom or never that the beſt of men can paſs through ſuch a ſcene of conflict and ſharp trial, without ſomething of defilement.

Our

Our Saviour himſelf indeed was aſſaulted by Satan, and by the world; but the *prince of darkneſs found nothing within him to* promote or aſſiſt his temptations, John xiv. 30. But he finds ſo much tinder in our nature, ready to catch fire, and blaze, at every ſpark of iniquity, that it is ſcarce poſſible we ſhould paſs through ſuch dangerous hours of conteſt, and keep our ſpirits pure and unpolluted.

Yet ſtill it muſt be determined, that where there is perpetual reſiſtance, and no manner of indulgence of theſe vicious ſcenes, where there is no conſent of the will to them, nor a neglect of any proper and appointed means to oppoſe and ſuppreſs them, there is no ſin.

Let this be a word of conſolation and ſacred encouragement to thoſe poor melancholy Chriſtians who are ſorely buffeted by Satan, and his helliſh ſuggeſtions, or are vexed with the wild and unruly inſults of fancy, under ſome diſtemper of the fleſh. Let them enquire whether theſe evil thoughts be not their conſtant burthen; whether it is not their daily and hourly toil of ſpirit, to ſuppreſs and caſt them out; whether they do not make this the matter of their holy complaint and mourning before God night and day; whether they are not wreſtling hard with theſe adverſaries of their peace, and pleading hard at the mercy-ſeat, for grace

grace to reſiſt and ſubdue them: Then let them take the ſame encouragement that St. Paul does, who is an excellent example both of ſuch ſufferings, and of ſuch hope and conſolation. 2 Cor. xii. 7—10. He had a *thorn in the fleſh;* he had an *angel of Satan ſent to buffet him;* he *beſought the Lord thrice; i. e.* often and earneſtly, for deliverance: And though God did not anſwer him immediately by a full releaſe from the temptation, yet he afforded him ſuch a *ſufficiency of grace*, that he could glory in hope of final victory. Nor did he call the *buffetings of Satan*, nor the *thorn in the fleſh*, his own ſins; but *his infirmities*, which he durſt even glory in, from his great aſſurance of the grace of Chriſt, to aſſiſt him in the combat, verſe 9.

I have written this to prevent the humble holy ſoul, that lies under theſe exerciſes, from charging itſelf with more guilt than the law or juſtice of God charges it with: Let ſuch a one alſo take comfort from thoſe words of the apoſtle, as *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh*, in the courſe of their lives, ſo there is no guilt in ſuch inſtances of ſinful imagination, where there is no indulgence.

Yet here it is neceſſary to take notice, that ſome perſons have heretofore given ſo criminal an indulgence to their ſenſual luſts, or

have

have been ſo freely engaged in profane or immoral converſation in their younger years, that they have tainted their fancy with many foul and impious repreſentations, inſcribed it with vicious words and images, and lodged a fatal treaſure of iniquity there. They have often recalled theſe ſcenes with ſo much delight, that when divine grace has been pleaſed to awaken them to a ſenſe of their folly, and give a pious turn to their ſouls, they have been many years perplexed with the vile workings of imagination: Theſe ſcenes of iniquity have returned unbidden, and riſen up inceſſantly, in ſpight of all their ſacred labour to aboliſh them: Theſe have filled their ſpirits with ſorrow and perpetual anguiſh; and there is juſt reaſon they ſhould deeply humble themſelves before God on this account. For though it is poſſible ſuch wicked thoughts may be ſuggeſted to holy ſouls, who have kept themſelves in their youth from this ſort of defilement; yet when perſons themſelves have been ſo far acceſſory to their own guilt and miſery, they ought to take freſh occaſion from their preſent temptations, to renew and maintain repentance for their old ſins.

Beſides the habit or cuſtomary return of ſuch corrupt imaginations, that theſe unhappy ſinners have entailed upon themſelves, they have alſo given hereby ſuch a fatal handle to the temptations of the devil, and furniſhed ſuch

ſuch a pleaſing habitation for unclean ſpirits, that lewd and blaſphemous thoughts have been continually impoſed upon them with eaſe, by the ſport and malice of the tempter; theſe have given them many grievous days and reſtleſs nights, conſtant fatigue, and combat, and ſorrow of heart; nor could they ever free theſe inward receſſes of the brain, theſe ſecret chambers of the fancy, from the impure pictures which they themſelves have hung up there, till the whole mortal tabernacle has been demoliſhed. Thoſe wicked images have been graven ſo deep, and laſted ſo long, that all their pious labours and tears have never been able to blot them out, till the fleſh itſelf has been deſtroyed in death.

Betimes then, O ye young ſinners, awake betimes to ſerious piety, and flee every youthful luſt; avoid the perſons and the places that would tempt you to ſenſual or profane practices; turn your eyes away from the very appearances of guilt, and from all defiling repreſentations; let your ears be deaf to all the language of profaneneſs or immodeſty, leſt you ſuffer a fatal inroad to be made upon the avenues of the fancy, and admit ſuch a guilty treaſure of miſchief and iniquity there, that may lay a foundation for toil and anguiſh, and much bitterneſs of ſoul, in the following and the better years of life.

Queſtion III. *Whether we may be guilty of ſin in our dreams, in hours of delirium under a fever, or in ſeaſons of diſtraction and madneſs?*

Anſwer. I join all theſe three together, becauſe they all agree in this, that the repreſentations made on the brain are ſo ſtrong and predominant in all of them, that *imagination* is almoſt equal to *ſenſe;* it imitates ſight and hearing, and the appearances and actions of life ſo nearly, that the ſoul cannot diſtinguiſh them; and ſometimes the wild operations of the brain overpower even the preſent impreſſions made upon the ſenſes, and fancy prevails above the ear or the eye. Dreaming is but ſleeping diſtraction, as the diſtraction of a delirious hour is but a waking dream.

Now where the images of fancy are ſo prevalent, the ſoul even of a holy man may be ſo far overpowered, as that reaſon is quite thrown out of its ſeat; the underſtanding is dazzled and deceived by the glaring flaſhes of imagination; the notions of conſcience, the rules of duty, and the ſacred motives of religion, are, as it were, confounded and overwhelmed, and loſt for a ſeaſon, under the conſtant ſtrong impreſſions of the animal ſpirits revelling in the receſſes of the brain: And where the diſorder riſes to ſuch a degree as this, the ſprings of carnal appetite and paſſion are ſoon touched and awakened; and

and being of a kindred nature, are ſuddenly inflamed; ſo that a man of piety may be hurried to conſent to ſinful practices, under any of theſe waking or ſleeping diſtractions. In ſuch a caſe the guilt ſeems to be leſſened ſo far as the reaſon is drowned in confuſion and darkneſs, and the thought and conſcience overpowered and cheated with falſe impreſſions. Perhaps at the end of this diſorder, when the man awakes into daylight and reaſon again, he knows nothing of what has paſſed; or if he recollects the folly, he bluſhes and mourns over the infirmity of his nature; and while he aſks forgiveneſs of God, he can ſcarce forgive himſelf, that he ſhould yield the leaſt conſent to criminal inclinations.

Where the confuſion of thought does not ariſe to ſuch an overwhelming degree, but there are ſome debatings of reaſon, ſome notions of duty, ſome workings of conſcience, and yet the ſoul complies at laſt, there the guilt is increaſed, and riſes higher, in proportion to the exerciſe of the intellectual faculties. But this crime can never become near to the guilt of the ſame actions, done in a waking hour, or in a ſeaſon of health, and ſoundneſs of mind and memory.

I have known a man of ſerious piety take the name of God in vain, and curſe under the power of diſtraction, which he would have abhorred with all his ſoul, if he had

been in his ſenſes, and not abſolutely overpowered by the diſordered humours of the fleſh.

Yet take this awful *caution* by the way: That where theſe diſorders or diſeaſes of the brain, ſleeping or waking, are cauſed by our own folly or wickedneſs, by luxury, by unmortified luſts, or by any immoral practices, the caſe ſeems to be far worſe, and perhaps the guilt of every irregular action is proportionably enhanced and aggravated thereby; as in the wild freaks of a drunkard, who has indulged his vicious appetite, till it has overcome all his better faculties; for there reaſon itſelf, and the common judgment of mankind, determine the crimes then committed againſt the ſociety to be juſtly puniſhable: He that kills a man in his drunken fit, muſt be put to death when he is grown ſober. And how far God will impute every thing that is criminal, and whether he will not deal with ſuch a one in rigour, according to the full guilt of the crime, can be determined only by God himſelf. He ſees all the ſecret motions of the fleſh and ſpirit; he weighs every circumſtance in a true balance; he knows perfectly all the rules of ſtrict and impartial juſtice; and will judge the world with divine equity and wiſdom.

Let us watch and pray then, leſt we enter into temptation in the healthful and waking hours

hours of life: Let us carefully ſhun all thoſe practices that have any tendency to diſcompoſe the brain, or introduce diſeaſe, or diſorder into that part of our animal powers; leſt if we bring theſe inconveniencies upon ourſelves by our own guilt or negligence, we expoſe ourſelves to more juſt cenſure and puniſhment, for the unhappy effects and attendants of ſuch a diſordered imagination.

And there is another reaſon too why we ſhould take care at all times to employ our thoughts and our time aright; and that is, that we may introduce a better habit into animal nature, and provide better againſt thoſe ſeaſons wherein either the daily courſe of nature, or the afflictive providence of God, may ſeem to give the powers of the fleſh an exceſſive or ſuperior influence over the faculties of the mind. Let us never indulge the corrupt appetites, the unlawful deſires, or the ſinful paſſions that work within us: Let us be watchful againſt every riſing enemy, and ſubdue the vicious propenſities of nature by holy diligence in our proper duty, and by earneſt addreſſes to the throne of grace: Let us treaſure up in our imagination the ſacred hiſtories of the Bible, and fill our memory with the things of religion; that the ideas of better things than riches, honours, and pleaſures, may be ever ready to ſtart up and appear to the ſoul, when it is at leiſure from other ne-

ceſſary buſineſs. This might happily furniſh out ſafer and ſweeter ſcenes to entertain fancy at midnight-hours, or when the brain labours under worſe diſorders by reaſon of ſome bodily diſtemper. The wiſe man tells us, that a *dream cometh through the multitude of buſineſs*, Eccl. v. 3. And by the multitude of thoughts that paſs through the mind, and are entertained with delight, in the vigorous and wakeful parts of life, the animal powers of fancy and paſſion will generally be in ſome meaſure influenced and regulated. The beſt way then to cure covetous, or ambitious, or luxurious dreams, is to fight againſt the workings of theſe iniquities when we are awake; for a very pure fountain, even under ſome caſual diſturbance, will not ſend forth its ſtreams ſo much defiled, and ſo muddy, as where the ſpring itſelf is filthy or corrupt, and under ſome diſturbance too.

Queſt. IV. *Whether all perſons are equally defiled with original ſin?*

Anſw. We muſt here diſtinguiſh between the *guilt of ſin* belonging to the perſon, and the *power of ſin* that is in the nature.

Now whatſoever *guilt* is derived to any perſon from Adam, by communion with him in his firſt apoſtaſy, the ſame is derived to all the poſterity; nor is this the thing that is doubted or enquired here.

But

But as to the *power of ſin* in the nature, it is evident that there are not the ſame degrees of ſinful propenſity, vicious appetite, and paſſion, in the bodies of all, even from their very birth and infancy. The conſtitution of animal or fleſhly nature in ſome, is much more ſullen or greedy, more wanton or peeviſh, more ſlothful, or proud and haughty, than it is in others, according to the various mixture of the blood and humours, and the different ferments that ariſe thence, whereby the ſoul is early impreſſed and governed, and habituated to particular vices betimes.

Though we are all *conceived in ſin, and ſhapen in iniquity*, Pſal. li. 5. yet there are ſome who are emphatically wicked in their very conſtitutions, who are more remarkably *eſtranged* to all that is good *from the womb, and go aſtray as ſoon as they are born, ſpeaking lies*, Pſalm lviii. 3. Whereby the Pſalmiſt may ſeem to intimate, that ſome perſons have wickedneſs more eminently running through their families; they are born and bred utter ſtrangers to God, honeſty, and goodneſs; and they have a ſort of craft and knaviſhneſs mingled with their temper, that they practiſe lying as ſoon as they can ſpeak.

It is evident enough to the obſervation of every man, that ſome perſons are of a more temperate, more chaſte, more modeſt, more

friendly and kind diſpoſition, even in animal nature; they are more plain-hearted, and of a more honeſt and ſincere make from their very infancy; they have more of the dove and of the lamb in them, than of the fox, the bear, or the lion; and the ſoul is not led aſtray to the practice of the contrary vices, either ſo far, or ſo early, as thoſe who, perhaps, from their immediate parents, have received fleſh and blood more tainted with theſe iniquities. And if this be called a *different degree of original ſin*, I will not ſtand now to conteſt the word, nor can I utterly deny the matter.

But ſtill it is abundantly evident alſo concerning every one of us, who are ſons or daughters of Adam, how ſinful or how holy ſoever our immediate parents were, that we bring vicious propenſities enough with our fleſh and blood into this world, that if we encourage and indulge them, and walk after the fleſh, we ſhall ſoon be found ſufficiently wicked here, and grow meet for a juſt condemnation hereafter; and this will be the caſe of the beſt conſtitution, unleſs a mighty change paſs upon nature, by the power of renewing and ſanctifying grace. All *that is born of the fleſh is fleſh*, or ſinful; and *except a man be born of water and the Spirit*, that is, regenerated by the Spirit of God, which is typified by baptiſmal water, *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Queſtion

Queſtion V. *Whether the ſame ſin always carries equal guilt with it in different perſons, who have the ſame advantage or the ſame degrees of knowledge?*

Anſwer. It ſeems to be ſuppoſed in the queſtion, that different means or different meaſures of knowledge make the ſinner more or leſs guilty in the ſight of God; and indeed our Saviour himſelf has determined that point beyond all diſpute, Matt. xi. 21, 22. Chorazin and Bethſaida having ſeen the miracles of Chriſt, and heard his doctrine, were much more culpable than Tyre and Sidon, whoſe great ignorance would render their caſe more tolerable in the day of judgment.

But to anſwer this queſtion, let it be conſidered that there are other things beſides knowledge that make ſins more or leſs heinous. The ſame crime committed under a ſmall and ſingle temptation, is much more culpable than when the temptations are many and ſtrong, whether they be within us or without us. Now if a perſon of a ſharp and fretful conſtitution, or whoſe natural juices of the fleſh are ſoured by long ſickneſs and pain, ſhould fall into frequent paſſions of ſinful anger, notwithſtanding all his labour and watchfulneſs againſt it, he is not quite ſo criminal in the ſight of God as another, who has no ſuch peeviſh and fretful ſprings of paſſion in his nature, neither by original conſtitution, nor by any accidental diſtemper.

The

The man that perpetually carries about with him the vigorous and active ſeeds of any ſinful appetite or affection, may take ten times more pains in mortification than another does who is of a happier temperature, and yet may fall more frequently into *his own* peculiar *iniquities*, and be overcome by the *ſin that eaſily beſets him:* Nor is his guilt ſo great as it is in thoſe who are bleſſed with a better animal nature, but either take no care to guard againſt thoſe ſins, or perhaps excite nature to practiſe the ſame iniquities, beyond its own inbred appetite.

And for this reaſon it is evident, that a perſon who in different periods of life commits the ſame ſins, may deſerve much more blame at one time than another; ſo wanton practices are more hateful and criminal in old age, and ſlothfulneſs and inactivity in duty is a greater fault in the days of youth; becauſe in thoſe different ſeaſons of human life, there is leſs temptation to thoſe ſins ariſing from the fleſh.

So fear, and ſudden anger and ſorrow, whereſoever they are found exceſſive in perſons of enfeebled conſtitutions, labouring under ſharp pains, or oppreſſed by nervous maladies, and weak natural ſpirits, have not quite ſo much guilt in them as thoſe ſins would have in the ſame perſons when they were in a ſtate of vigour and health; for then they had leſs uneaſineſs within to join with the provocations

provocations and temptations from without; and beſides, they were much more capable of bridling the inferior powers, of countermanding the animal motions and evil ferments: Then they could more eaſily maintain a wiſe ſelf-government, they could range their thoughts in better array to reſiſt theſe ſudden attacks of the fleſh.

I might add further alſo, that under theſe ſort of infirmities they are more expoſed to ſudden ſurpriſes; the hurry of the natural ſpirits ſhakes the whole network of the nerves in a moment; they throw all the blood into the face at once; or, by a contrary operation, ſpread an univerſal chill and tremor over the body, and clothe the countenance in paleneſs and the image of death.

They flaſh like gunpowder, they force the ſweat through every pore, and convey a ferment of paſſion through the whole nature at once, ſo that the ſoul is ſometimes ſeized into a ſudden conſent to the ſinful motions of the body before it is aware; which dangers are much more eaſily prevented in a calm and healthful ſtate of life.

But here let me inſert a cautionary remark or two, to guard againſt the abuſe of this doctrine, which is deſigned for the relief of holy, humble, and dejected ſouls.

1. *Caution.* Many who return frequently to the commiſſion of the ſame ſin, excuſe their own ſlothful and ſottiſh negligence by throwing

throwing the blame on their conſtitution; let them take heed, leſt it be found that it is their own wilful indulgence of ſinful appetite and temptation, and not conſtitution, hath made the habit of ſin ſo ſtrong within them, and hath formed their very temper into ſuch vice and iniquity, which was by no means born with them in any uncommon degree, but is owing to their own wicked practice: God ſees through ſuch vile hypocriſy and diſguiſe as this, and will puniſh the ſinner with a double ſtroke of vengeance, one for his guilty ſenſuality, and the other for his hateful diſſembling. If I would give an inſtance of this pretence, I think it is found no where more frequently than among the drunkards, the paſſionate, and the unclean; and ſuch perſons alſo diſcover the vanity of their pretences, in that they always excuſe their ſins, and ſeldom or never mourn under them.

2. *Caution.* If your iniquity that frequently beſets you, ariſe from any bodily diſorder which you have brought on yourſelf by your own ſins, dare not murmur, and charge the providence of God with this your diſeaſe or impotence, but maintain a humbling ſenſe of your own guilt, which, perhaps, God hath thus chaſtiſed in righteouſneſs: And let younger ſinners avoid all thoſe guilty practiſes that may turn their very nature and better conſtitution into vice and raging appetite, or into ſuch diſeaſes as may expoſe them

to

to the violent and unruly inſults of fleſh and blood. Let them take heed of indulging vehement deſires or averſions, even to common, indifferent, or lawful objects, leſt affection get the aſcendant, and ſubject the fleſh; and, by that means, the ſoul alſo, to a ſlaviſh habit of appetite and paſſion.

3. *Caution.* Let not thoſe perſons, whoſe happier conſtitution, or uninterrupted health, gives them ſome advantages in this reſpect, throw off their daily watchfulneſs, or neglect prayer, leſt a vain ſelf-confidence betray them into foul iniquities: And let them remember too, that their guilt will be the greater.

Nor ſhould thoſe whoſe appetites and paſſions are become more unruly, either by the original temperature of their fleſh and blood, or by particular diſtempers, indulge themſelves more eaſily in a ſinful compliance, under pretence that their guilt is leſs; unleſs they are content to dwell for ever in fire and ſorrow, upon this condition, that ſome of the ſorrows of hell be ſharper than theirs, and ſome part of the flame be hotter and fiercer. O rather think that you are called by the providence of God to a ſtricter watch, to more frequent and fervent prayer, and to a more laborious reſiſtance of the fleſh; and the grace of Chriſt is ſufficient to aſſiſt the weakeſt warrior, and make him an overcomer even in the hardeſt conflict.

But

But this naturally leads me on to the next queſtion.

Queſtion VI. *Whether there be not a very unequal diſtribution of providence in theſe various conſtitutions of mankind?* And how can this be reconciled to ſtrict juſtice, to make the difficulties of the ſtate of trial ſo much harder in one man than it is in another, by expoſing him to much ſtronger temptations?

Anſwer. This difficulty, which dwells on the lips of profane ſinners, is eaſily ſolved by attending to a few ſuch propoſitions as theſe:

1ſt, This muſt be laid down as an eternal and an unmoveable truth, that the great God has all poſſible perfections belonging to his nature, and his whole conduct in providence is ever regulated by thoſe perfections; ſo that he can no more be unjuſt, than he can be impotent or ignorant; nor can any part of his conduct be unrighteous, any more than it can be weak or unſkilful.

2dly, It is evident to the univerſal obſervation of Heathens as well as Chriſtians, that mankind is a fallen and degenerate rank of beings, who have loſt their primitive innocence and happineſs; and are running on to deeper guilt and miſery, with headlong and thoughtleſs haſte: Though it is only the ſcripture that informs us how this came to paſs

paſs, which philoſophers, by the light of nature, could never find out.

3dly, If the whole race of creatures, which were ſo degenerate, had been put under the moſt difficult teſts of obedience, in a ſtate of trial, appointed in order to their recovery from ruin, not one of them had any juſt reaſon to complain, or murmur againſt their ſovereign Ruler in the methods of his wiſdom working toward their recovery.

4thly, If ſome of theſe fallen and degenerate beings have therefore ſome eaſier circumſtances of trial appointed to them, ſuch ought to be very thankful indeed, but others ought by no means to quarrel with their Maker, or treat their fellow-creatures with envy. *Is thine eye evil becauſe he is good?* Matth. xx. 15.

5thly, Perhaps many of thoſe who have leſs inward temptations in the fleſh, are, in the courſe of providence, expoſed to greater outward temptations in the world; and in this caſe, the ſtate of trial for both of them may be equally difficult; the one is balanced with the other.

6thly, How great ſoever the difficulties appear which any ſoul is expoſed to by the unhappy circumſtances of fleſh and blood, to which it is united, there is ſufficient relief provided in the covenant of grace; there is ſufficient atonement and pardon in the blood of Chriſt to remove the deepeſt guilt, and

ſufficient

ſufficient aids of the bleſſed Spirit promiſed in the goſpel, to mortify the moſt violent appetites, and perverſe affections of the fleſh; and there are many ſouls now in heaven, who wreſtled hard with as vile conſtitutions of body here on earth as you are vexed with, but have been made conquerors by the power of this goſpel.

7thly, Conſider alſo, that the harder the fight is, the brighter ſhall be the crown, and the moſt laborious combat ſhall be attended with the faireſt prize. Maintain your conflict with fleſh and blood, though the ſtrife may be never ſo ſharp and painful; hold out till you are called up to the world of ſpirits, and you ſhall find that your *labour was not in vain.*

Have a care then, O man, of contending with God thy Maker; nor let the earthen veſſel ſay to the Potter, *Why haſt thou formed me thus?* If thou giveſt a looſe to thy corruptions becauſe they are ſtrong, thou practiſeſt the ſame folly as if the keeper ſhould give a looſe to a lion, becauſe it is a very wild and large one, and let him run at random becauſe he is full of rage. What doſt thou think the event will be, O ſinner? When thy native appetites are ſtill grown ſtronger by indulgence, and become utterly ungovernable, and thou art plunged into unſpeakable guilt, and endleſs miſery, what a cutting reflection it will be to thy conſcience, that

that, inſtead of watching, praying, and ſtriving againſt thine inbred ſins, thou wert ever quarrelling at the great God thy Maker, that he did not form thy nature juſt according to thy directions: Eſpecially when thou ſhalt ſee others advanced to high ſeats in glory, and reaping the joys of the Chriſtian conqueſt, who had as many adverſaries to wreſtle with in the days of their fleſh, and each of them as violent and as mighty as thine.

Queſtion VII. *If the ſprings of ſin lie ſo much in the fleſh, are not ſome methods of reforming the fleſh proper to be practiſed, in order to facilitate the work of mortification, to cure our ſinful diſtempers, to prevent actual tranſgreſſion, and break the habits of ſin?*

Anſwer. Since the ſeeds and occaſions of ſin lie ſo much in the fleſh and blood, doubtleſs it is our duty to take ſome care that theſe ſeeds of iniquity be ſuppreſſed and killed, as far as poſſible, by all proper methods; ſuch as do not neceſſarily interfere with other commands of God, or plain duties of Chriſtianity. But in all matters of this nature, perſons are in danger of running into extremes.

The Papiſts require a certain *abſtinence from meats*, and *forbid to marry*, without a due attendance to the circumſtances of times, places, and perſons; whereby ſuperſtition is ſupported, and ſinful appetites are often irri-

tated, inſtead of ſuppreſſing them. At other times they wear ſackcloth on their fleſh, they ſcourge and whip themſelves, they lay their bodies under much painful diſcipline, and ſometimes too under bloody correction, in order to mortify ſin. But it was never required of God, that we ſhould break the ſixth command in order to keep the ſeventh; for the advice of Chriſt about parting with a *right-hand*, or a *right-eye*, Matt. v. 29. is to be taken metaphorically for the mortification of *darling ſins*, or, at leaſt, in a comparative ſenſe, that it is better to bear the loſs of a limb than to be eternally miſerable, if there were no other poſſible way of eſcape.

Beſides, it is part of their deſign alſo in Popery, to make ſome ſort of atonement and ſatisfaction for paſt ſins by theſe ſuperſtitious ſeverities, which are ſo far from being acceptable to God in this ſenſe, that they diſhonour the blood of Chriſt, and will be abhorred of the Father.

Some Proteſtants run to another extreme, and becauſe our religion is ſpiritual, therefore they neglect many due reſtraints of the fleſh, and think to ſecure themſelves from ſin merely by the exerciſes of the mind, without due guard or care to keep the body under proper diſcipline, in order to mortify the luſts thereof. They are ready to imagine that this is too legal a way of mortification, that it detracts from the liberty and

privilege

privilege of the Chriſtian ſtate, to keep under the fleſh by any ſuch methods of ſelf-government.

But in oppoſition to theſe two extremes, the ſcripture ſeems plainly to lead us to a *medium;* and the rules which may be drawn from the word of God, may be chiefly compriſed under theſe few Heads.

1ſt, *Never dare indulge the craving of the fleſh in any one ſinful appetite or inclination;* much leſs make *proviſion for it, to fulfil the luſts thereof*, Rom. xiii. 14. Here indeed you ſhould be well informed what is and what is not ſinful, and not bind the body to extravagant and unreaſonable reſtraints, under a miſtaken notion of ſin and duty. But when you are once upon juſt grounds ſatisfied what is unlawful, then, if *ſinful* neighbours, or if *ſinful* ſelf *entice thee, conſent thou not;* for *every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed*, Prov. i. 10. James i. 14. Compliance with ſin is the way to make ſin ſtrong: Every ſuch indulgence gives it courage to demand more, and makes the inclinations grow into a confirmed habit. It is the character of the *children of wrath*, that *they fulfil the deſires of the fleſh*, Eph. ii. 3.

2dly, *Keep out of the way of temptation.* Whatſoever place, company, diverſion, or unneceſſary buſineſs, you have found ready to provoke a corrupt paſſion, avoid it as

much as poſſible. *Remove thy way afar off, and come not nigh the door of her houſe*, Prov. v. 8.

3dly, *Deny the fleſh ſometimes in its lawful appetites, to teach it ſubjection*, and let it learn to be governed, by being ſometimes reſtrained, and diſappointed in its innocent deſires, that it may with more eaſe be withheld when unlawful objects appear. The holy apoſtle ſeems to have this in his eye, when he tells the Corinthians, that he *that ſtriveth for the maſtery muſt be temperate in all things:* And he aſſures them, that he *keeps his own body under, and brings it into ſubjection*, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. And in the laſt verſe of the eighth chapter, He *will eat no fleſh while the world ſtands, rather than make his brother offend.* Surely then he would uſe the ſame ſelf-denial, rather than be in danger of giving himſelf leave to offend.

4thly, *Keep the body in ſuch temper and circumſtances as may render it fitteſt for the preſent duty.* If exceſs of faintneſs and feeble ſpirits make it unfit for ſervice, refreſh it with the proper comforts of life. If through exceſs of vigour, and a florid ſtate of the blood, it grow unfit for any duties of religion, or lead the mind aſtray to dangerous vanities and allurements, it may ſometimes be kept under by diligence in labour, by ſparing diet, and diminiſhed hours of ſleep. *When Jeſhurun waxed fat, he kicked*, Deut. xxxii.

xxxii. 15. And the danger of Sodom was plenty and luxury, which the ſcripture deſcribes by *fulneſs of bread*, joined with *abundance of idleneſs*, Exod. xvi. 49.

And it is upon this account that you find *faſting* joined with *prayer*, in the New Teſtament as well as in the Old; and perhaps the word *watching*, which is coupled therewith, may in ſome places be ſuppoſed to include its literal ſenſe alſo; for abſtinence from full meaſures of food and ſleep may give occaſional aſſiſtance to the ſoul in devout exerciſes; and where experience finds that a full indulgence either of ſleep or food unfits the body, or clogs the ſoul in any duties of religion, there thoſe appetites of the fleſh are certainly to be reſtrained.

I might add, in the laſt place, *That if any ſharp diſeaſes of the body, or diſordered humours, awaken the ſinful ferments of any paſſion or appetite, in a more than ordinary manner, ſeek relief from the phyſician, to reſtore the fleſh to its beſt ſtate of ſervice to the ſoul;* that it may be delivered, through the divine bleſſing, from vexing diſquietudes, from ſudden ſurpriſes of ſin, from the feeble flutterings of animal nature, from langour and heavineſs, and every other infirmity; and may join chearfully and regularly with thy willing ſoul, to glorify God, thy Maker and thy Saviour.

But,

But, after all, *never imagine that theſe, or any other methods of mortification, will be effectual to ſuppreſs and cure one ſin, without converting and renewing grace*, without the knowledge and faith of Jeſus Chriſt, who is the only Redeemer of mankind, appointed to *ſave us from our ſins;* the only Phyſician able to cure our ſpiritual maladies. It is a deep ſenſe of the univerſal corruption of nature, together with a betruſting our whole ſelves into the hands of Chriſt, to be ſanctified and ſaved, is the only effectual and ſure way to holineſs. It is *faith muſt purify the heart*, Acts xv. 9. It is by the influences of the *great and precious promiſes* of the goſpel, that we muſt be made *partakers of a divine nature, and eſcape the corruption that is in the world through luſt*, 2 Pet. i. 4. All our labours, ſhort of regeneration, and an entire change of the whole ſoul, by the mighty work of the Spirit of Chriſt, are but like nipping the bloſſoms of a poiſonous tree, like cutting off the twigs, or lopping the branches, while the fatal ſtock ſtands firm ſtill, and the root maintains its life and full vigour. Thus it will be ever ſpringing with new ſhoots, and bring forth fruits of guilty and mortal ſavour. But converting grace is a blow at the root; it kills the ſinful principle, or, at leaſt, gives it a deadly wound. Seek earneſtly therefore the Spirit of Chriſt,

to

to renew your whole natures: *Walk under* the influences of this *bleſſed Spirit*, *and you ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh*, Gal. v. 16, 24. For it is only *they that are Chriſt's*, *who have crucified the fleſh*, *with its affections and luſts;* and *if*, *by the* aſſiſtances of this *Spirit*, *you mortify the deeds of the body*, *you ſhall have a life* here on earth, made up of the peace and beauty of holineſs, and you ſhall die out of this world, into a diviner life of glory. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

Date Due

Ja 29 '48			